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English figure skating

Edward Frederic Benson

MVT
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ENGLISH FIGURE SKATING

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ENGLISH FIGURE SKATING

A GUIDE TO THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF SKATING IN THE ENGLISH STYLE

BY

E. F. BENSON

MEMBER OF THE SKATING CLUB, AND NATIONAL SKATING
ASSOCIATION (FIRST CLASS)

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PREFACE

THE object of the ensuing little treatise is an extremely ambitious one, for it is designed to help the skater at the very beginning of his career, nay, even before he has a career at all, unless a profusion of complicated falling may be reckoned as such. For much of the difficulty, which even the most athletic find in their first steps in skating, is due to the fact that they do not know what they have to do, but only what it looks like when done. I have, therefore, attempted to analyze the movements and positions necessary for the proper progression and turning of the body on ice, and to build rules out of this analysis. There are, no doubt, many other ways of learning to skate, and I only (and that with diffidence) put forward one that in practice seems fairly satisfactory.

The object of the book goes beyond this, for it is also designed to help the skater even when he is well on the road to becoming a first-class performer. Many people who should easily emerge into those altitudes find themselves sticking at certain points for unconscionable periods, because they do not know *how* certain difficulties must be dealt with. And here again I hope to have indicated one way of dealing with these.

E. F. Benson.

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ENGLISH FIGURE SKATING

INTRODUCTION

IN this inventive world no one is ever able to say for certain, without fear of disproof in the remote or even immediate future, that an end has been found to the possibilities attaching to any branch of science or sport. There is, for instance, no doubt whatever that when the Atlantic cable was first laid, those pioneers of telegraphy thought that the last word had been said regarding communication between England and America. An instrument was handled in London, and as soon as a button or what-not was pressed, the message began to quiver in a needle at New York. London could speak through the thousands of miles of submarine cable to the listener across the ocean with the same instantaneousness with which a man speaks to the friend in the arm-chair next to his. Clearly—it appeared then—there was no further possibility possible.

Yet nowadays, wires being no longer necessary, the message flies across the uncabled air, ship speaks to ship, the isolation of vessels on the high seas is a thing of the past, and the passengers from one port to another are no longer cut off from news. Yet such a possibility would have been authoritatively denied, not only by the man in the street but the man of science fifty years ago. In sport, too, the same phenomenon is for ever occurring. In the case of golf, for instance, nobody ten years ago would ever have dreamed that a green two hundred yards off was within the reach of any but the very finest drivers. Yet now there are many men not of the first class, who, instead of dreaming about it, "do not dream but do," and cheerfully arrive there with a rubber-cored ball. Nobody, again, till Mr. Lovejoy invented his interminable cannon, would have conceived it possible that anybody could make a spot-barred break of, say, ten thousand. But they would have been wrong in so supposing.

But every generation thinks itself right, and to-day no skater in the English style believes that a fresh turn can be invented. There are, so we are accustomed to think, but two edges to a skate, and since, whether proceeding backwards or forwards, we can (in some sort of fashion) turn from any one edge to any other, revolving either to the right or to the left (for we do not see how we can revolve in any third way), we should be disposed to say that the possible limit of turns has been reached. The design, therefore, of this treatise, is to put down all that has been ascertained hitherto about the possibilities attaching to the skate when trodden on and (more or less) controlled by a skater who performs in what is known as the English style. Perhaps even before it appears somebody will find a fresh mode of turning or of changing an edge; and with this thought in mind, the writer merely wishes to say that he hopes to be among the first to go and practise it, entirely oblivious of his now obsolete and discarded treatise.

Of that interesting and beautiful form of skating known as the Continental or International style, it is not proposed to treat at all, firstly, it may be said, because the writer does not know anything whatever about it, and secondly (and this is an even better reason), because the Continental style is as different in every respect from the English as is Association football from that played under Rugby rules. Attitudes and movements essential to the one are rigidly debarred from the other, all edges, all changes of edge, all turns are skated on a perfectly different principle, and, in a word, the two styles have nothing whatever to do with one another. They are both practised by steel-shod feet on ice, and there the resemblance ends.

A word, however, about the two styles, though not from a technical point of view, nor with any purpose of comparing or estimating the relative values of each, may not be out of place. In England, during the last twenty years, an immense impetus has been given to skating generally by the opening of indoor rinks, with ice artificially frozen and thus independent of outdoor temperatures. But ice thus obtained is an expensive creation, and the rinks have necessarily been of very limited size. Now the skater in the English style is a positive glutton with regard to ice; he desires to skate fast turns with long bold edges, which require an immense extent of surface: he wants also to join with two or three others in skating what is known as combined figures, which are even more rapacious of space. For when four or even three of these greedy gentlemen meet to skate their combined figures, they require a circle of ice not less than a hundred feet in diameter to amuse themselves at all satisfactorily, and would indeed like very much more, while, during their performances they demand that nobody else shall trespass on their sacred circle. In covered rinks, therefore, which can only be made to pay if the ice is always crowded, these poor folk are absolutely out of place. There is not room for them, and, in consequence, if they wish to pursue their sport, they either wait patiently in England for outdoor surfaces to freeze, or impatiently for the date when they can escape from the usual sub-tropical winters of this island, and find among the high Alps immense rinks of flawless ice where they can skate as fast and as large as they choose.

Now this is not the case with the Continental skater. He does not skate combined figures, and though no doubt he would often like more room than he gets on a crowded rink, he can always manage to put in a good deal of practice. Thus a curious inversion has taken place, and we see the Englishman who wishes to skate in his native style flying to the Continent in order to do so, while the Englishman who wishes to skate in the Continental style may remain in London. The English skater may deplore the fact, but it is a thing that cannot possibly be helped.

Rightly or wrongly it has been imagined from time to time that there was some sort of rivalry between the two schools, and skaters of the one persuasion have been supposed to try to advance the interests of their own faith at the expense of the other. Such rivalry is as futile as it is unreasonable, for there is no question whatever that both will continue to flourish, and rivalry between them is as foolish as would be rivalry between the two styles of football. If such existed in the past, there is good reason to suppose that it exists no longer, and at Davos, St. Moritz, Celerina, and other places where skating flourishes, and the two schools are cheek to jowl on the ice, their several votaries lie down together, so to speak (after a fall), like the lion and the lamb. For since there is plenty of room for both schools, and since nobody in his senses, who knew anything about either, would deny the extra-ordinary pleasure to be got out of each, or refuse to acknowledge the high standard of skill which fine skating in either style demands, it is difficult to see how any rivalry can exist. Neither of them lives at the expense of the other, nor desires the demise of the other, nor thrives by the other's decay, which would be the only excuse that a disciple of the one school could have for disparaging or injuring the interests of the other. And no such excuse exists.

As a final but most important word of introduction I must record my heartiest thanks to Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond for the admirable photographs which appear in this book, and to her models, Mr. George Wood, Mr. Fedden, Mr. Leese, and Mr. Kingscote, for the excellent examples they have given her of fine English skating. These photographs, it is hoped, will show the skater what actually happens at those crucial moments just before a turn, on a turn, and just after a turn, so that he can see what preparation is needed, on what part of the skate the turn is executed, and what readjustment of the body and limbs is necessary after the turn to arrive at a true and steady edge. What surprised the writer, and what also, he thinks, surprised those who so kindly skated for these photographs was the amount of arm-work which the best and quietest of English skaters employ over their turns. Since this, however, confirms a pet theory of his that skating is done with the shoulders, he is extremely content at the result. The old jerky style in which the skater had his elbows permanently glued to his sides, it appears from these photographs, has gone out among first-class skaters, and the shoulders are allowed free play. Efforts have been made to secure a picture of the skater in every position connected with the movement of turning, and while it is not necessary, for instance, to show the correct position to be assumed before such a turn as the forward counter, since such position is practically identical with that appropriate to the forward bracket, which is fully illustrated, it will be found, it is hoped, that the right positions for every type of turn are here shown. This business of securing a series of photographs which should be satisfactory and complete, was the work of two Swiss winters, and whatever the value of the text, the writer believes that no English skater who feels an interest in the technique of his sport will fail to feel a debt of gratitude to the illustrator.

One further word is necessary about these photographs. In every case almost it will be found that the skater is looking at the ice, a thing which the beginner will instantly discover he is told not to do. But for the purposes of the camera, it was necessary that all these turns should be skated within an inch or two of a fixed point, in order to ensure a perfectly sharp impression. The skaters therefore who so kindly stood for them were compelled to look at the ice (contrary to their habits) in order to execute their turns on exactly the required spot.

My warmest thanks, finally, are due to Miss Ethel Gurney, who has read through the whole of the proofs and made many most valuable suggestions which I have incorporated, and pointed out many mistakes which I have corrected.

CHAPTER I

Short history of English skates and skating—Practical advice with regard to choice of skates and boots.

THE earliest known form of skates were made of bone, either cow-ribs, horse-bones or the bones of reindeer. These were ground down till they had a flat travelling surface with two straight parallel edges, and specimens of them exist, among other places, in the Museum at Cambridge, in the British Museum, and in the Guildhall Museum. That the invention is of great antiquity is shown in Fitz-Stephen's Chronicle, written in Latin, and published in 1180, and translated by Stow in his "Survey of London," published in 1599. In it the translator gives the following:

"When the great fenne or moore (which watereth the walls of the citie [London] on the north side) is frozen many young men play on the yce, some, striding as wide as they may doe, slide swiftly . . . some tye bones to their feete and under their heeles, and shoving themselves by a little picked staffe doe slide as swiftly as a bird flyeth in the aire, or an arrow out of a crossbow."

These skates have holes drilled in them no doubt for fastening to the boot, and in specimens in the British Museum a metal loop is let into the hole.

Now the detail that a stick was used for propulsion led antiquarians to the too hasty conclusion that a stroke could not be taken from such bone skates as these. Unfortunately for these theorists, there came along in due time one who combined the erudition of the antiquary with the daring of the skater, and Mr. G. Herbert Fowler, with an industry and a courage which we cannot too much admire, has told us how he disposed of these baseless limitations.

"I have myself," he says in his delightful little book "On the Outside Edge," "skated upon a pair of my own making—copied from the Guildhall Museum type—at the cost of many bruises, it is true. . . . Certainly a stroke cannot be taken off the side of the skate, but it can be taken off the toe, which I found quite sufficiently hard to bite on the hard ice of the National Skating Palace, and which would bite even more readily on the soft outdoor English ice."

The bone skate, then, must be taken to be not merely a runner, but a blade off which a stroke could be taken. Whether skaters in those days were as skilful as Mr. Fowler, we cannot tell; we know, however, that a stroke can be taken off such skates, though only off the toe.

The next step in the evolution of the skate seems to have been either to shoe these bone skates with iron, or to substitute for the bone a plain piece of polished iron. This again, still of the nature of a runner rather than a blade, gave place to the blade which, with certain modifications, is used to-day. Originally the skate was used probably for purely utilitarian purposes, namely, to enable a man to progress at greater speed on a frozen surface whether of a road or a lake; but even in 1180, as we see from Fitz-Stephen, the idea of sport was attached to it, we must presume, by the young men who slid swiftly as a bird, while in the time of Charles II, as we learn from Pepys, skating was a recognized sport, though we may gather not a very common one, else surely Pepys, the true Athenian in his desire for any new thing, would have seen it before. Here is his entry (2nd ed., 1829, vol. i, pp. 345, 347):

"*Dec.* 1, 1662. To my Lord Sandwich's to Mr. Moore and then over the Parke, where I first in my life, it being a great frost, did see people sliding with their skeates, which is a very pretty art."

On the same day we find that Evelyn in his Diary makes the following entry:

"*Dec.* 1, 1662. Having seen the strange and wonderful dexterity of the sliders on the new canal in St. James' Park performed before their Majesties by divers gentlemen and others with scheets after the manner of the Hollanders, with what swifteness they pass, how suddenly they stop in full carreere upon the ice. . . ."

But that bladed skates existed long before this is clear from the famous print in Bragman's "Vita Lÿdwine," published in 1498. This represents the very regrettable accident that happened to Saint Lÿdwine who was knocked down by one of her friends and broke a rib. She is represented as lying half-recumbent, supported by two of her friends, and on her foot is, without doubt, a bladed skate with the toe very much turned up.

But the bladed skate having now definitely made its appearance as an implement of sport, we find that since the sport which it supplies is of a dual nature, namely speed skating and figure skating, its development proceeds also along two lines. With the evolution of the speed-skate and its long runner not curved, as in the skate for figures on a definite radius, we have nothing to do, and curiously enough though skating has developed so immensely we find that there is but little to record about alterations in the blade. The history of the development is so admirably and concisely given by Mr. G. H. Fowler in his work already quoted, that I will give his summary of it verbatim.

"By 1772 had begun the shortening of the toe spike and curvature of the blade's edge, which are characteristic of figure-skates. These are well shown in . . . certain figures which are taken from the classic work of Lieutenant Jones. In these days the blade tapered from toe to heel. . . . In 1831 the toe-spike was almost less, the heel lengthened, and the blade still tapered from toe to heel. . . . The skates drawn by Cyclos in 1868 are represented . . . the toe spike has been reduced to a minimum. With the club skate of 1869 . . . the toe spike had altogether vanished in England: heels were made either square or round and longer than in the older forms: the curvature of the blade was about what it is to-day, an arc of a seven-foot radius."

This brings us down to modern days, and we may pass at once to the practical consideration of what is the best type of skate to-day. First then with regard to the means whereby the skate is to be fitted to the boot, there have been innumerable methods of fastening them, whereby skates may be carried in the hand and fitted to the boot at the lake side, but the beginner is strongly advised to have nothing to do with any of them. The only right method is to have skates firmly screwed on to a pair of boots set sacredly apart for this purpose, and so fixed that not until the sole and heel of the boot disintegrate will they be able to drift from their moorings. And without doubt the best mounts known are those called the Mount Charles. These consist of two plates secured (by means of screws passing through them), the one on to the sole, the other on to the heel of the boot. On each of these plates is a raised mount resembling the "chairs" through which railway lines pass, and through these mounts in similar fashion pass the blades of the skates and are secured there by screws passing through the mounts and through holes bored in the blade of the skate. There is thus nothing left to the vagaries of springs, catches, or patent fasteners: every part of the skate is bolted and screwed, and by this means also the additional annoyance of straps, which in order to be of any use have to be buckled far too tight for comfort, is spared the skater.

With regard to the blades themselves, many small alterations and modifications have been tried from time to time without producing any very notable results, and provided that the running surface of the blades is ground to a true radius, I do not think that much else matters. But they must be ground to a curve, and that curve must be a true one, else the skater is liable to be rocked and disturbed on his edge while passing from one radius to another. The running surface of the blade, then, should be ground in such a curve that if the circle of which it forms a segment were completed, the circle itself would be one of seven-foot radius or six-foot radius.

But that the skate should be on a curve is obviously necessary, since otherwise (if it were quite flat, that is to say) no turn would be possible except on the extreme toe or the extreme heel of the skate, since the whole length of it would bear equally on the ice. But since the skate is ground on a curve, only a very small portion of it bears directly on the ice, and on this the turn is made while the rest of the skate, fore and aft of the turning-point, is actually clear of the ice.

Between the merits of a radius of seven and of six feet much has been written but little decided. Clearly, since in a blade of six-foot radius, the curve is sharper, and less of the length of the blade bites the ice, it would seem that a turn can be more easily and cleanly made on it than on a skate where the grinding surface in friction with the ice at the turn is greater. On the other hand, when the skater is not turning but travelling on an edge, the greater the length—within limits—of the bearing surface of the skate, the firmer is the skater's edge and the bolder his curves. Theoretically then it would seem that the skate of seven-foot radius has the advantage on edges, and the skate of six-foot radius on turns, and this is probably the case. But many skaters find that skates of a six-foot radius are quite good enough for edges, not being so curvedly ground that there is a tendency to skate small hard edges, whereas the slightly increased facility in turns due to skates of a rather shorter radius incline them to use these instead of the older seven-foot pattern. The difference in any case is but slight, but, among others, the present writer, if he were choosing a new pair, would get skates of six-foot radius in preference to those of seven.

Much also has been said from time to time about the respective merits of blades, the edges of which are set at obtuse angles, at acute angles, or at right angles to the travelling surface. No discussion need here be entered into: the right-angled skate, the skate, that is, in which the sides of the blade are perpendicular to the ice, is a perfectly satisfactory instrument. It also has this advantage, that a right angle is a known and certain angle, while, though one obtuse or acute angle may perhaps be a very nice thing, another, though differing very slightly from it, may be a very nasty one.

The beginner therefore in search of practical advice, and desirous to know what sort of skates to get, may feel quite safe if he asks for (and obtains) *Rectangular skates of six foot radius with Mount Charles fittings.*

It is more than possible, finally, with regard to choice of skates, that he may be recommended either by a shopman or by an enthusiastic friend to get blades known as Dowler blades, but he is recommended not to do so. These ingenious contrivances have concave sides, so that there is greater thickness of blade at the toe and heel than in the centre of the skate, and this concavity is ground to a side-radius of sixteen feet. An advantage in using these is obvious, since on the strike (the blade of the skate from which the strike is taken being concave) a greater push-off is obtainable. It is claimed also for them that since the breadth of the skate is greater near the toe than it is on the same part of the skate in ordinary blades, forward turns are more easily accomplished. But the unanswerable objection to this is, as will be seen later, that turns are not (or should not be) done on the toe at all, while with regard to the more powerful stroke obtainable from these blades, the writer has found (or thinks he has) that there is a much more rapid loss of speed while travelling on the edge in Dowler blades than in the type he recommends. And this is a drawback of immense weight when the skater comes to take part in large combined figures. He wants above all things a skate which (provided he holds himself steady on his edges) will preserve the speed gained by his original stroke as long as possible. But the Dowler blade, from the build of its concave sides, seems theoretically to set up greater friction with the ice, and in practice appears to confirm the theory.

Further, with regard to apparatus, though the merits of a six-foot radius may balance nearly evenly with those of a seven-foot radius, there is no question whatever that between boots and boots there is a difference "a whole Atlantic broad." Though there is not the smallest difficulty in getting an entirely satisfactory boot, it is necessary to know what sort of boot is entirely satisfactory in order to be able to get it, and above all things it is necessary to give new boots a trial first by using them once or twice for walking, and making sure that they are comfortable.

The sole should be of sufficient thickness to let the screws that fasten the plate be driven well home without their coming too close to the inner surface of the sole, in which case one is apt to feel them on the bottom of the foot as hard lumps. The heel should be big enough to hold the heel plate easily, and it is most necessary not to have the heel high, for this tends to put the skater on the front of the skate-blade, a position in which it is impossible to skate properly. There should be plenty of room over the toes, for if the boot is tight there it chafes the foot, and also makes it cold, and to skate with cold feet is a thing nobody has yet succeeded in doing. There is, moreover, no reason to give support to the front of the foot, since, as will be seen, it should never be used in skating.

On the other hand, the boot should fit closely, for purposes of support, over the ankle, and to ensure this the sides of the top leathers should not be made so that they are quite brought together when they are laced up, for in this case it is impossible, if they stretch at all, to get them any tighter. The tongue of the boot also should be made of very soft leather, else, when the boot is tightly laced, it is apt to chafe the front of the foot. If it does, a strip of spongio-piline put under the tongue will make it comfortable.

Many people have special boots made for skating, extending further up the leg than those ordinarily used in walking, and this plan would certainly seem to give more support to the ankle. Personally I have never used other boots than ordinary walking boots, made with the few requirements mentioned above, and unless the skater suffers from abnormal weakness of the ankles, it is probable that a very little skating will strengthen them sufficiently. Many skaters wear very thick socks or stockings, in order to save the foot from getting rubbed and chafed. They should not, however, be so thick as to make the fit of the boot over the toes at all tight, for this is a far more fruitful source of chafing than is occasioned by socks that are too thin.

Finally it is best to put the mounts on to the boots so that the blade lies straight along the long axis of the foot. Some skaters have the blades inclined to the inner side of the foot. They say it enables them to get more easily on to the outside edge. But then surely it makes it more difficult (if they are right) to get on to the inside—that much neglected edge. But wherever put on, there should be plenty of skate under the heel.

And now, without aid of stick or the worse horror of a pushed chair in front of him, the skater may step on to the ice.

CHAPTER II

The strike—The forward edges—Form—The back edges—Edges to a centre—Cross stroke on the outside back—Outside back eight.

THERE is a very silly proverb that tells us that it is only the first steps that cost so much, and the skater who thinks he has only got to get over initial difficulties in order to find the rest plain sailing will be cruelly disillusioned. That sounds discouraging; it is really the most encouraging thing that can be told him, for it enables the beginner at once to claim and to receive the sympathy of those fortunate gentlemen who appear to be manœuvring with such ease and swiftness on the rink in front of him. So skating, we hasten to tell him, is all difficult; nobody has ever skated so well that he finds it easy, and if he did, and was also a person of the most moderate ingenuity, he would invent something that would instantly rank him with the beginner again.

But for the beginner's further encouragement, he may be told that never again will he feel quite so helpless as he does when he first attempts to get on to an edge of any kind whatever. The skate WON'T go there, and if he is human he will say:

(i) My skates are blunt.
(ii) My skates are too sharp.
(iii) My skates are put on wrong.
(iv) I hate skating, and I don't want to skate.

Those are all quite untrue, especially the last. And a little later he is equally sure to say:

(i) My left skate is put on wrong.
(ii) My left ankle is too weak to skate at all.

What he really means is that he is right-footed, as nine people out of ten are. Therefore he must bring his left foot up to the standard of the right.

But before this fallacious gentleman gets on to an outside edge at all, or on to an inside edge, he has to strike, and if he is wise (most people are not) he will learn to strike at once, for the simple reason that it comes first. He will strike, it is true, very feebly and very badly, but words cannot say how much better it is to learn to strike at once than to be coaxed on to an edge of some sort by the aid of a friend, or a stick, or a chair, or by wriggling about on both feet and then spasmodically taking up one. And since bad habits are very easily formed, especially when they have no merit of any kind, and very hard to get out of afterwards, it is better that at the outset he should attempt to strike properly before thinking about edges at all.

The Strike

Skating—to put it briefly—is done on the heel with the shoulders. The beginner then, at the beginning of all things, should stand, with both feet on the ice, not leaning forward at all, because if he does he is laying the foundation of the worst of all habits, that of skating on the front part of the skate, and he should get his shoulders back ready for use. He will not need them yet, but they should be tidy, in their place. He should not, however, stand stiffly; he should hold himself as the ordinary person of good carriage holds himself, and stand as he stands.

He must now (this is difficult) try to take the right foot off the ice for a moment with his weight temporarily poised on the inside edge of his left foot, look a little to his right, swinging his right shoulder a little forward, and then put down his right foot again, bending his right knee and leaning forward. He should then, pushing off, as has been said, from the inside edge of his left skate, straighten the right knee again. He will find that he has begun to move a little. He will then certainly put down his left foot again.

With both feet on the ice he will come to a standstill again, and he must do exactly the same thing, starting on the other foot. A very tedious quarter of an hour will pass, and at about the end of that time he will have a sudden inspiration which will lead him, having taken this stroke with one foot, to keep the other off the ice. He will then find that he is moving forward on the ice on one foot. In the exultation and precariousness of the moment he will probably wave the other in the air. If a special grace prevents his doing that, and he can remember to let this momentarily unemployed foot lie somewhere near the heel of the one momentarily employed, he has not only begun to move but he has also begun to skate. It is highly unlikely that this special grace will visit him, but it has been known to happen.

Now all this sounds childishly simple, but the beginner who has learned to be able to move forward on one foot, whether on an edge or on the flat, while the other foot is off the ice, and not waving in the air, but somewhere near the heel of the foot on which he is momentarily travelling, has begun to skate. Whereas the other beginner who wriggles forward on both skates, and spasmodically raises one and goes on an edge, it is true, but on a perfectly worthless edge, to the right or left, has begun wrong. Skating begins from a stroke taken from one of the two feet, not from an impetus derived from wriggling on both simultaneously.

For the further comfort of the beginner it may be stated that the attempt to get impetus from leaning on the inside edge of one foot while both are on the ice, and then swinging the body forward to get a stroke of some sort on the other foot, is practice that will never be wasted. For the correct strike lies at the root of all skating, and to begin wrong is to be forced to begin again. Speed, and the easy and correct acquisition of speed, is a matter entirely of strike; the correct position on the edge to which we shall soon pass is a matter of strike also.

To recapitulate, then, the first step is this:

Stand on both skates quite upright and at rest. Lean on the inner edge of one skate, and at the same moment raise the other foot off the ice and instantly place it on the ice again, bending the knee and making a forward swing or inclination of the body. Straighten the knee and the body again, and try to raise the foot on which you have just leaned, from the ice, and let it hang close to the heel of the foot which has just struck.

Finally, always put the other foot down if you think there is danger of falling, but if matters have already gone too far, and a fall is inevitable, do not struggle. Above all, never put out a hand towards the ice, for this may result in a severe wrist sprain or even worse. Fall limply and loosely. This again sounds simple, but it is rather important. Everybody of course falls over and over again, and though it is quite right not to mind falls, it is quite as right to minimize them. For to continue to fall over any particular stroke, or later on, turn, tends to make you frightened of that turn, and to be frightened of a turn is equivalent to skating it badly. Skating is perfectly done only when it is performed with confidence.

But it is impossible to overestimate the value of a correct strike or the handicap with which an incorrect strike weights the skater. You have but to look for a few moments at some combined figure to see this. There you will probably find one man at least who, though his turns and edges may be excellent, and though he strikes apparently with power and certainly with effort, seems always to be exerting himself; while opposite him, perhaps, is another skater who appears to be using no effort whatever, and yet sails out on to his circumference with far greater speed than his more violent partner, and from the utmost edge of the figure sails back again with equal smoothness and facility. And that facility, so charming to watch and so immensely advantageous to its possessor, is almost entirely the result of that single moment when the body is swung forward on to the foot that is just going to take the stroke. The movement in the one case is smoothly made and correctly timed, the shove off and the body swing being made absolutely simultaneously; in the other it is probably made with a jerk and a consequent unsteadiness. Precisely the same thing may be seen on the golf-tee; one player with both actual and apparent ease sends a long low shot that tears through the air, another with longer swing, perhaps, and certainly much greater effort, is forty yards behind.

It is worth while then at the outset to take any amount of pains over this launching of the foot on to the ice. Never mind about the edge at present: get the foot down with the forward swing of the body and the bent knee, and as soon as it is on the ice straighten the knee and stand straight again. Try to put the foot down so that the skate first touches the ice about half-way up the blade, then by standing upright get the weight on the back part of the skate again. And reject as a failure any stroke that puts you on the front part of the skate, and causes you to lean forward.

The Forward Edges

It does not at first matter, as has been stated, where the strike takes you, whether you travel on the edge or on the flat, provided only you travel in an upright position, which is the same thing as travelling on the back part of the skate. But in these attempts you will find from time to time that the skate is biting into the ice, instead of merely sliding over it, which means that for the moment you are travelling no longer on the flat of the skate, but on an edge of some sort. As soon as you find that (given that you are travelling on one foot only) hold your breath, remain as rigid as if you were stalking and you were afraid the stag had seen you, and wait for what happens. You will find, provided only that you hold yourself quite still, that you are moving for the moment on a curve. If you are on your right foot and the curve is running towards the right you are on the outside edge, if the curve is running to the left you are on the inside edge. Most probably you will be on an inside edge.

From this moment the forward edges must be practised, beginning with the inside edge, and care should be taken to practise with each foot alternately. At this moment, too, you must begin to attend (and never afterwards cease) to form.

Standing still, then, strike out according to the directions already given with the right foot, and while still standing erect, let your whole body lean a little inwards (*i.e.*, if on the right foot lean a little towards the left, if on the left foot towards the right) till you feel your skate leave the flat and bite into the ice. Your first tendency, having felt this will be to lean too heavily, so that you get on a hard edge which quickly curls inwards and makes a sharp curve. Correct this until you feel you are travelling lightly on the edge in a long gentle curve. Before the impetus is exhausted strike from the travelling foot on to the unemployed, and try to get on to a similar curve with this foot.

Every member of the unruly body must now be brought into its proper position. Beginning, then, at the top:

(I) The head must be carried upright, and must face in the direction of progress, looking along the curve which the skater hopes to make. As long as the head is upright, it does not much signify whether the eyes look at the ice or not as far as this practice goes. But since in combined figures later on the skater has to look at his partner as much as he conveniently can, it is as well to form a habit of not looking at the ice.

(II) The shoulders must follow this sideways direction of the head; and thus, when skating on the inside edge with the right foot, the right shoulder must lead the whole attitude of the body, following in a sideways position the curve that is to be made, not being stuck at right angles across it. Similarly, when the left foot is performing an inside edge, the left shoulder must lead.

(III) The legs must follow the direction set by the shoulders, the right leg, when being used, leading, the left being carried behind it. This unemployed leg should hang loosely and easily, not stiffly, but above all things it should be kept still, and not allowed to stray away from the employed leg. The knee of it should be bent just so much that the toe, which should point a little downwards, is well clear of the ice. Provided this is done, any little latitude with regard to the carriage of the unemployed leg is permissible; it may be carried so that the heel of the travelling leg is in contact with it at its heel or at its instep. The knee of the employed leg, on the other hand, should be straight, not stiffly braced or tightly held by the muscles, but without any bend in it.

The shoulders, as has been stated before, should be carried well back, not with the stiffness of a soldier at drill but with the habitual carriage of a well set-up man, and, above all things, they should not be hunched up or pushed forward, but pressed down. This correct carriage of the shoulders gives the clue to the position of the arms which, so long as they are not waved about, or crossed behind the back, or sharply crooked at the elbows, may be carried in the position most comfortable and natural to the skater. In every skating manual, I believe, the beginner will find himself told to turn out the thumb of the hand corresponding with the unemployed leg, with the palm of the hand in front, and since this is so universally stated, one must suppose it is right. But the reason for it is altogether beyond me, nor do I believe that one skater out of ten does anything of the kind.

The part of the skate to be skated on is the part between the centre of the skate and the heel. To get on to it, it is necessary to stand straight, so that the centre of gravity lies not in the front part of the body and legs but in the back. This attitude should be taken up the moment after the knee has been bent for the stroke, and while the unemployed leg which has just helped in the shove off is coming home to heel, and once taken up it should be unwaveringly maintained. After the stroke the body should not move again till the preparation for the next stroke begins. If it wavers or shifts about, the balance, being disturbed, will in turn disturb the truth and smoothness of the edge.

The new stroke should be taken up, in the manner prescribed, before the impetus is exhausted. Simultaneously with making it, the body as it comes back from its forward swing must adjust itself to its new position. The head, which has been facing towards the left, must face towards the right in the direction of the new curve, shoulders and body must follow it, and the foot which has just come off the ice must in its turn go to heel.

Now every point in these requirements of form is important, but that which lies at the base of them, most important of all. It also (happily) is that which makes all the rest easier, when once it is mastered, and it is the necessity of skating well back on the blade of the skate. This ensures the upright position, it ensures also a steadiness of edge, which is impossible if the skater is leaning forward and is thus on an insecure balance, and one that is maintained only, and that imperfectly, by muscular effort. Moreover, if the skater is well back on the skate the tendency to waver on the edge soon ceases to exist, with the effect that the original impetus acquired by the stroke lasts far longer than it does if he is fidgeting, with constant slight readjustments of balance. Also the tendency to move the arms and the unemployed leg disappears; there is no temptation to do so, since the balance is firm.

With regard to the proper attitude to be assumed for the outside forward edge, it is necessary only to recapitulate what has been said about that requisite for the inside forward. The skater must travel with head erect on the back part of his skate, with shoulders carried well back, in a sideways position to his curve of progress, with the shoulder corresponding to the foot on which he is travelling, leading. The stroke, too, must be taken in precisely the same manner as before, with a thrust from the inside edge of the unemployed foot (not from the point of the toe) and a forward swing of the body.

But here a difference comes in. The skater hopes to travel on the outside edge of his skate, and thus in order to keep his body above it, he must lean outwards till the outer edge of his skate bites the ice. This he should do in the act of putting his foot down, not striking on to the flat of his blade and then getting on to the edge, but putting the skate on to the ice *on* its edge, while above it the body makes its swing forward with the knee of the striking foot bent, getting its shove off from the inner edge of the other foot. At first the beginner will not grip his edge satisfactorily: he will either get on to the flat, or (another common failing) will turn his toe too much out, so that his skate runs away in front of him, so to speak, towards the right, and he cannot get his body over it. If the beginner feels this tendency (as he most likely will), he should strike out not so wide to the right (if starting on the right foot), and consciously point the toe of his right foot more inwards so as to come well underneath his body. The moment the stroke is made the left foot, which has given the shove off, should be brought to the heel of the right.

Now everybody without exception feels a sense of insecurity when first the outside edge bites, and so is chary about getting his body sufficiently inclined outwards, since he has no third foot on the outside of his skating foot to put down. Many people, therefore, at this stage offer to help him by the support of a hand, but it is far better to learn the edge without this. If the head is properly held, *i.e.*, looking towards the shoulder of the travelling foot, it will not be long before the body follows the lead thus given. Others hold their right hand a little out in front of them and in the direction of the curve, and look at it with mournful and melancholy eyes. This is a bad habit, and has to be unlearned again, for it disturbs the proper position of the arms. And there is no short cut to acquiring this edge; it has to be attempted again and again, care being taken to give to each foot its due share of practice, until the attitude becomes familiar.

It has been stated that the stroke must be taken in precisely the same way (except for the angle at which the foot is placed on the ice) as in the inside edge. There will, therefore, instantly be a chorus of demur, since it was also stated that the shove off is taken from the inside edge of the foot that is leaving the ice. But this is still the case, for at the moment when the foot on which the skater has been travelling on the outside edge is to come up off the ice, he has to turn his skate over, so that from the outside edge, on which he has been moving, he crosses the flat of the skate and is poised for a moment on the inside edge. This is the moment of the shove off, which must be taken not from the toe, nor yet from the heel, but from the side of the skate. True, the toe of the skate is the last part of it to leave the ice, but the push, the impetus must have been acquired before. Striking from the toe is a common habit, but an ungraceful and also a destructive one, since in the manner of a pick, the toe chips up little chunks and splinters of ice, making dangerous holes in which others may trip. There is, in fact, no worse fault.

Now, however quickly the skater improves at these two edges, it is but dull work practising all day at the forward progression, and thus before he is able to make anything like a complete circle on either forward edge, he is recommended to begin to put in some work over the back edges. But let him, while in this stage, be firm with himself, and not attempt to make little scrambling turns, which he mistakenly calls "Threes." For the three, or turn, consists of two edges, a forward edge and a back edge, united in the middle by the turn itself. How can he then hope to skate a three if he cannot skate the back edges? Moreover, if he does this (and unfortunately many skaters will advise him to) and attempts these turns before he is master of his back edges, he will quite certainly skate his back edges all wrong, and have to unlearn again at a future period all he thinks he has acquired.

But for the sake of variety, let him, while the forward edges are still imperfect, begin to learn the back edges.

THE BACK EDGES

The beginner will not believe it, yet it is a fact, that though the inside forward edge has presented far less difficulty to him than the outside forward, the inside back, to skate it at all properly, is much the hardest of all the edges, while with regard to skating it really well, it may be confidently asserted, that out of a hundred men just so far advanced as to skate forward eights on both edges and outside back eights practically perfectly, there will not be found five who can skate an inside back eight of anything approaching the same class. Skating, it is true, is all difficult: many wish that the inside back eight was impossible.

Quite a beginner can soon strike from rest on to the forward edges, but the strike on to the back edges is far more difficult. The reason of this is that the forward swing of the body, which is so large a part of the forward impetus, is much more difficult to execute backwards, and can be executed by nobody with equally powerful results. Let the beginner then be content to stand on both feet, then for a moment get his weight on the fore-part of the skate, and wriggle, pressing backwards from the inside edges of his skates until he begins to move backwards. This direction is necessarily rather vague, for when it comes to wriggling, you cannot exactly tell what any one person will do, but general wriggling and shoving from the toes of the skate will end in moving backwards. Here again most skaters get a friend to help them, who, moving forwards and holding both their hands, pushes them backwards. That practice, again, is strongly prohibited: the backward stroke has to be learned, and the sooner it is learned the better. It will quite certainly not be learned by being pushed backwards.

Here again every direction already given for forward edges holds good. Let the left foot be used as before, after a little backward movement has been set up, planted on the inside edge, and let the right foot be put down on the ice with bent knee, in such a way that the centre of the skate touches the ice first, with a backward swing of the body and in particular a backward swing of the shoulder of the unemployed foot, *i.e.*, the left foot. Then, as before, the knee should be straightened, the body brought to an upright position, so that the skater is travelling on the back part of the skate, and the head, as always, turned in the proposed direction of progress. This, when an inside edge on the right foot is designed, will be looking towards the left shoulder, which, since the progress is backwards and the curve is being made towards the left, is leading, the shoulders and body, as in the forward edge, being in a sideways position. The left foot having left the ice, must be put in exactly the same position as on the forward edges, *i.e.*, close to the heel of the right foot, with the knee so far bent that it comfortably clears the ice. Then a fresh stroke has to be taken, and just as in forward progress it was said to be important to take the new stroke before the original impetus was exhausted, so, and more so, is it important here. There are further complications—bad ones.

Some sort of inside back edge is going on, and the right foot is being employed. The head therefore is—or should be—looking towards the left shoulder, and the eyes should be seeing what is in front of them, or in other words, behind the skater. The projected course of the back curve, in fact, should be visible. But now the left foot is going to do its best, and therefore it will be necessary for the head to look no longer towards the left shoulder, but towards the right, since the inside back curve of the left foot leads in that direction. The head therefore must turn from the left to the right, *and it must begin to make that turn just before the new stroke is taken up.* It must not wait to turn until the fresh edge has been taken up, but when the fresh edge is taken up, it must be already in position. Just as the stroke is being finished, therefore, begin to turn your head, and get it turned before the new stroke is completely laid on the ice.

This point is insisted on: three-quarters of the failures to skate inside-back properly are due to its neglect. For in every case when readjustment of the head and shoulders and body is necessary, the head must lead the readjustment. If then here the head is not round before the new stroke is complete, the shoulders and body will not be round either, and the first part of the new stroke is performed with every mortal member in the wrong place. Hence a feeble, wavering, and unsteady edge. Also a violent jerk of readjustment.

At this point, since the skater is supposed to be able to skate forward edges, both inside and outside, fairly well, and is beginning to break down the difficulty of inside back, a parenthetic word may be put in with regard to the manner in which this change of attitude, necessary on every stroke from any one edge to the same edge on the other foot, must be made. As has been said, the head must give the first impulse, and it must turn smoothly (though often quickly) from the neck. As soon as it begins to turn, the shoulders will be naturally inclined to follow a little, and when once the shoulders have begun to turn, *if* the shoulders are being held back, and the attitude is upright, the rest of the body will follow without difficulty. What is to be avoided is the turning of either the head or the shoulders or the body with a jerk, and this is most easily avoided if the head sets a good example of turning quietly and smoothly. But above all things, the head must begin the movement; if this is done the rest of the turning of the body follows naturally. But if the shoulders or body begin the movement, as many skaters are inclined to let them do, the whole readjustment becomes jerky and spasmodic, which is the criticism justly pronounced against much skating in the English style. But this criticism only really attacks second-rate skating; if the readjustment is properly made, *i.e.*, with the head beginning and the shoulders following, there is nothing spasmodic or jerky about it, the thing is quite rhythmical and easy.

Before the stroke of the inside back is brought to perfection it will occupy any skater for weeks. It is not suggested that the beginner should at once take weeks about it, but before he has got any real facility at all in it, should practise simultaneously the outside back edge, which at first is rather harder to get on to, but in which facility is far more quickly reached. As follows:

It is to be hoped that he has already wriggled a great deal in attempting to start the inside back edge. Let the wriggler therefore, partly for the sake of variety, but partly for the sake of acquiring the correct backward stroke, wriggle no more, since he is now starting on an edge that is far easier to hold than the inside back which he has just been practising. Let him therefore stand quite still with both feet on the ice. Let him shove off from the inside edge of his right foot (this also for variety, and to encourage or discourage the left foot), and, leaning outwards and backwards towards the left, make the same stroke as he has already made over every other edge, and turn his head till it looks along the right shoulder, and he can see the ice behind him. If he has practised the foregoing processes at all carefully, it will not be long before he feels his skate bite the ice on the outside edge of the left foot. The moment that he feels that—the feeling is both indescribable and unmistakable—let him again hold his breath, stay quite still on the back part of his skate, and see what happens. Nothing much will happen: he will get on to the flat of the left skate again. Let him encourage this undesirable inclination till he has passed over the flat, and is poised momentarily on the inside edge of the left skate. Then let him attempt a stroke on the right foot, bending and then straightening his knee and swinging the body back. The shoulders, as cannot be said too often, must follow the lead of the head, and thus on the outside back, when the right foot is employed, the head will look over the left shoulder, and the left shoulder will lead the body into the sideways position which is identically the same as was described with regard to the inside forward edge.

EDGES TO THE CENTRE

Some sort of edge, it is to be hoped, will by this time be acquired by both feet in both directions, and it is time to revert to forward edges. Here again a strange thing happens, for though it was found easier to skate an inside forward edge than an outside forward edge, it will be found generally more difficult to skate a complete circle on the inside edge than a complete circle on the outside, without losing proper position. The inside forward edge, when the attempt is made to skate it to a centre, *i.e.*, from a fixed point back to that fixed point, has a detestable habit of curling too much, so that instead of arriving neatly at the centre, the beginner finds himself (quite neatly) arriving at a point short of the centre, having skated not a circle but a converging edge, in the manner of a spiral. The reason again is clear: the whole weight of his body and of the unemployed leg has brought him on to a harder edge than he wishes, whereas on the outside edge he has had to overcome the weight of his body by leaning outwards, which tempts him less. Also, on the inside edge, even when he skated out and away from his centre, he can more easily see the centre, which tends to make him curl inwards towards it. But on the outside edge, if he means to make a complete circle, he cannot, if he looks in the proper direction, which is the direction of the edge, see his centre at all for the first half of his circle. Thus he does not tend to skate towards it. But the most common reason of all for curling in, is that he will not at first keep his body still. He has quite rightly let his right shoulder lead on the inside forward stroke on the right foot. But he must, having got it into position, check its tendency to go more round, thus setting up rotation of the body. The right shoulder has to lead, but not increase its lead.

Now at this point accuracy in direction of skating begins to be necessary. Hitherto the beginner has strayed at random over the ice, satisfied if he can get on to his desired edges at all, and heedless of where they will take him. But now he must put down on the ice as his centre some mark such as an orange or an india-rubber ball which will roll away if he touches it and not trip him up, start his edges from that, and after performing a whole circle on each foot in turn, bring his edge back at its completion to his centre again. It is important in all these edges without exception to bring the circle which has been just completed well up to the orange, and not let it come to a pause two or three feet short of it. These edges to a centre are generally called eights, since when each foot has completed its circle, the marks on the ice are in the form of the figure eight.

Inside forward Eight

The beginner should stand some three feet short of the orange, move quietly up to it with a couple of little strokes, and then with the shove off from the inside edge of the left foot, start his inside forward on the right close to the orange, and just short of it. The stroke should be taken in exactly the same manner as that in which he was instructed to take the ordinary stroke of inside forward, he should travel on the back part of his skate, and then simply go to sleep on the edge. Until he has traversed half his circle, he has nothing more to do except keep still. But having arrived there, he must (though always keeping his body quite still) wake up, and looking towards his centre, again be prepared to guard against getting on to too hard and curly an edge which will bring him not back to his proper centre but to a point somewhere in the middle of the circle he is trying to make. To avoid this he must keep his edge light, *i.e.*, not lean too pronouncedly inwards. On the other hand he may, it is to be hoped, find that his edge is "about" right (nobody's edge is ever quite right), and can see that if he continues his curve it will bring him back to his centre again. He may then have a further nap till he gets close up to it. When he is about a foot short of it, he must get ready for action again, take his fresh stroke with the left foot precisely as before, again turn his head outwards in the direction he is going, and go to sleep. If he has struck truly, and will only keep still on the back part of his skate, not letting the leading shoulder rotate further, it is absolutely certain that his edge will bring him back to the centre again. But he must not be discouraged if he finds the inclination to curl in rather difficult at first to overcome. It is this that makes the inside forward eight more difficult to skate neatly than that on the outside forward edge.

Outside forward Eight

This eight should be practised in exactly the same manner, and, though to a lesser extent, the same difficulty exists in it, namely, the necessity of counteracting the tendency to curl in, due to rotation of the body. It often arises from the habit of turning agonized eyes towards the centre before that point in the circle is reached at which the centre comes naturally into view, given that the head is being correctly held. This point is not reached till the middle point of the circle which is being skated is passed. But many people tend to get their heads too far round in order to catch, so to speak, the earliest possible glimpse of that land of promise, with the effect that the shoulders and body follow, and the edge, being too strongly leaned on, curls in, and they never get to the land of promise at all, but are becalmed short of it with a rotatory motion. These eights should be practised till the skater can with facility make them of a diameter of twelve or fifteen feet.

Formerly and not many years ago the National Skating Association required a third forward stroke to be learned before their lowest test could be passed, which consisted of outside edge skated with the stroke taken from one foot crossed in front of the other, and forward eights were skated in this atrocious manner. The only thing that could be said in its favour was that it necessitated, from the exigences of the position, that the stroke should be taken not off the inside edge of the foot leaving the ice but off the outside. But in all respects the stroke is hideous and ungainly; it necessitates a wrong position, as the unemployed foot has to be swung in front of the other, which is contrary to all canons of where it should be, and it puts the skater on the toe. Why it was ever put into this third class test passes the wit of man to find out, but since it has now been taken out, its disgraceful memory may with this parting execration be allowed to sleep. The skater should never even in his idlest and most mischievous hours practise a single stroke of this description.

Cross Stroke on the Outside Back

But the case of the cross stroke on the outside back is very different from that on the forward edges, and is a movement that must be practised with great care and diligence, since there is none in which more accuracy of striking and correctness of position is required, and none which so well repays the pains spent upon it, for more than any it teaches the skater control of edge and gives him facility in smoothly but rapidly assuming his proper travelling position. I have reserved it up till now in order to give the learner a change from continual practice of eights.

This stroke consists of pure outside back without any leaning on or shove off from the inside edge, as was the case in taking all other strokes, and the foot that is taking the stroke must be put down on the ice not by the side of but behind and across the foot that is on the point of leaving the ice. If the learner, following Mr. Monier-Williams' advice ("Figure Skating," p. 38), will try the movement first on the floor without skates, he will find it easier to understand. He should walk slowly backwards, crossing the feet behind, "allowing the body to fall backwards, so to speak, at each step on to the unemployed foot." This is an admirable suggestion, and one that will save the skater a good deal of fruitless puzzling when he first attempts it on the ice. But unfortunately this is not all.

It will be remembered that the impetus for every stroke was to be gained by a combination of two movements (i) a shove off from the inside edge of the foot leaving the ice, and (ii) a swing of the body, forward in forward edges, backward in backward edges. The shove off and the swing both enter into this stroke, but since the foot to be shoved from is on the outside back edge, and the feet at the moment of the stroke are crossed, it is clear that the shove off must be attained from the outside edge of the foot leaving the ice. Now the skater has been travelling, we hope, on the aft part of his skate, and this shove must run along the side of the blade from heel to toe till it terminates as the foot finally quits the ice in a *crescendo*, so to speak, from the side (not the point) of the blade near the toe. Simultaneously and correspondingly the foot that is going on to the ice must be put down first on the outside of the blade near the toe, and the weight, by using the backward body swing, must run back along the blade till it rests over the back section of the skate again, where it should properly be for travelling. On the stroke itself, both knees must be bent so as to get the body swing, but by the time the shoving foot is off the ice, the weight should be on the back part of the skate taking the new stroke, the knee of which should now, quickly but without a jerk, be straightened again, while the body resumes its erect position, and the other foot (now unemployed) goes to heel again till it is wanted for the next stroke. As the stroke is taken, the heel of the foot taking it should be consciously turned inwards so as to grip the edge. On the stroke, in fact, the body must give a little bow forwards from the knee, dipping and straightening itself, while the head, shoulder, and side of the body over the foot that is leaving the ice are being swung round. Otherwise, if the fresh stroke is taken with an unbent knee, it is a wooden and stiff performance, and lacks power. Moreover, the stroke (the feet being crossed) is taken from a very limited and cramped position; it is necessary therefore to bring to it all the body-swing that can be brought. The space at command is very small, and must be utilized to the best advantage. This is best done (I speak with diffidence, since I am differing from that excellent skater and lucid expounder, Mr. H. C. Lowther, "Edges and Striking," p. 26) by bending down a little to the stroke and then rocking back to an upright position.

The stroke will be found very difficult at first, but the beginner should not make it temporarily more easy by swinging the foot on to the ice. Previous to the stroke it should be carried to heel, and when the stroke is taken it should not be swung but placed on the ice with a bent knee, not on the flat of the blade but on the outside edge near the toe, immediately after which the knee should be straightened, while the weight moves on to the back part of the skate.

Up till the moment of putting, say, the right foot on to the ice, the skater will have been travelling on the outside back of the left foot, and his head will have been looking over his right shoulder, which has been leading. For the next stroke, of course, the head will have to be looking over the left shoulder, which will lead, and this change of attitude must be begun as the right foot goes on to the ice by reversing the position of the head, while the shoulders and body immediately follow and fall into their new position. This, too, must be done smoothly and without a jerk but quickly, so that the correct position for outside back may be attained as early as possible in the stroke. It must also be retained till the last possible moment, *i.e.*, when the next stroke is taken up. During the progress on the edge the skater should get well back on his skate, and putting into practice Mr. Monier-Williams' advice of "falling back" on each stroke, get right on to the heel at the end of it, thus pulling out, as it were, the length of his stroke. It is directly after that that the shove-off begins, which ends, as has been said, in a *crescendo* off the side of the blade near the toe, which is the last part of the skate to leave the ice.

Apart from the stroke itself the position and attitude is precisely the same as on outside back, and the beginner must above all things remember to get his unemployed foot into the correct position at the heel of the other, not let it, as is often done, swing slowly round the employed foot until it takes up the stroke. The head and shoulders again should be brought round very smoothly and without a jerk, since a jerk, besides being ugly in itself, sets up rotation, and throws the skater on to a hard edge which prevents his keeping the stroke long and light.

There are, therefore, three back eights that can be skated—one on the ordinary outside back, one on the inside back, and one on the crossed stroke of outside back. Of these it is probably better to reserve the two latter for the present, for though theoretically they should come in this place they are so much more difficult than anything the skater has attempted hitherto, that he had better make further general progress before disheartening himself over them. Besides, skating is an amusement, though one to be taken with extreme seriousness, and he is probably sick to death of eights. The ordinary outside back eight, however, presents no great difficulty if he is getting accustomed to move with accuracy to and from his centre, and is fairly strong on this particular edge.

Outside back Eight

The initial difficulty here is starting on a back edge at a point. The skater should stand a yard or so away from his centre, take a little backward shuffle, and start his edge on the right foot close to the orange. He should at once take up his correct position with his body sideways to the direction of progress, and his head looking over his left shoulder, and be careful not to strain the ease of the position by trying to see the orange too soon, but wait (again going to sleep on his edge) till it naturally comes into view over his left shoulder. In approaching it, he must remember that he will take up his next edge off a little piece of inside back, which will take him a little further away from the centre. He may therefore up till the last moment skate straight to the orange, since this little change of direction will automatically keep him on the near side of it. Throughout his circle he should travel well on the back of the skate, since the least leaning forward will cause his edge to waver.

CHAPTER III

Forward changes of edge—Forward turn—Back changes of edge—Outside back eight on the cross roll—Inside back eight.

THE beginner, it is hoped, is now fairly secure on his four edges, and can hold them with success: he must therefore begin to learn (for such is the way of the world) how to lose them again, not involuntarily but voluntarily, making the change from outside edge to inside, and from inside to outside, at will. Since, however, it is desirable to make the back changes of edge at greater speed than he has hitherto acquired on his back edges, it is better to leave these until such time as he has learned the forward turn, and can put himself on to a fairly fast outside or inside back edge.

Forward Change

The skater must here take a little run on the ice or skate half-a-dozen vigorous strokes to get up speed, since these changes are much better learned at speed than when travelling slowly, for it is important not to be in too great a hurry to change the edge (which must be done soon if the pace is poor), but settle down on a firm outside edge, holding the head and body in the correct position with the unemployed foot behind. The body will thus (travelling, let us say, on the right foot) be leaning over to the right, and it is necessary, in order to change the edge, to bring it up to the vertical, so that it is momentarily on the flat of the skate, and then lean inwards, until the inside edge bites the ice. The vertical position, *i.e.*, when the skater is travelling on the flat, should be passed over as soon as it is arrived at, and the whole movement be executed smoothly without a jerk of any sort.

This sideways inclination of the body is not easy at first, especially, to make smoothly, and skaters make it more difficult for themselves by not travelling on the back part of their skate, for if the body is leaning at all forward, the change becomes almost impossible. And here, again, as always, it is right to let the head take the lead. As follows:

The head, like all the rest of the body, will on the outside forward edge be a little inclined towards the right. The movement should start from it, and it should be tilted over till instead it inclines a little towards the left, as it should do on the inside forward. If this is done, the right shoulder will almost instinctively follow it, and from being (since the lean of the body has been to the right) a shade below the level of the left shoulder, it will end by being a little higher than the left shoulder, as it should be on the inside edge, and, the body following, the change will be made. It will be understood that these movements must not be made jerkily, the head cocked on one side, or the shoulder shrugged up, but the whole movement must be that of a very faintly swinging pendulum. But the head begins it.

The correct "form" in which to execute these changes has, I think, become more strict of late years, largely owing to the fact that the St. Moritz school of skating attaches great importance to them, and insists that they should be imperceptibly executed. Thus the direction given in the Badminton volume of skating (p. 98) that "the unemployed foot should be brought up alongside the employed and swung out slightly in front" is no longer permissible; the unemployed foot must be kept in its place, which is at the heel of the employed. This swinging of the foot has the effect of bringing the skater on to a harder and more accentuated edge on the outside forward, while the moving of the foot back again starts the body on its pendulum-like movement. But it cannot be tolerated; the change must be executed without the slightest help from the unemployed leg. Nor, again, is the advice to lean more heavily on the outside edge just before making the change to be accepted. Certainly it makes the change easier because it is in the nature of drawing the arm back before delivering a blow; the body recoils, *i.e.*, leans more to the right, in order, the moment after, to start more briskly about leaning to the left. But it seems to the present writer to be of the nature of an unnecessary facility; and if only the head starts the movement, the change ought to be executed without difficulty and with perfect smoothness. Only it is quite necessary to be travelling on the hinder part of the skate. The position of the head, except with regard to this very slight sideways movement, requires no readjustment. It has to look towards the right shoulder the whole time.

Inside Forward Change

The second forward change of edge is from the inside to the outside, which is rather more difficult, the reason being that when skating the inside edge, from which the change has to be made on to the outside, the balance of the body has to be shifted from the side on which it naturally is, till it leans outwards. But exactly the same manœuvres must be gone through: the balance must be well back on the skate, and the head must initiate the pendulum-like sideways swing. There is a universal tendency here to get on to the fore part of the skate directly after the change has been made; a little conscious bracing of the shoulders back will obviate this.

And at this point in skating, when the four edges have been fairly mastered, and the two forward changes fairly made, the fun begins in earnest. True, there are two rather tiresome back changes in store, as well as two very tiresome back eights, but these are all best left alone till the learner has arrived at some sort of speed on his back edges, which at this time it is presumed he has not acquired. But it is time for him now—the moment has been long delayed—to make a turn, and pass from a forward edge to a back edge without stopping or putting the foot down, or making any intermediate manœuvre except that of the turn itself.

The Forward Turn

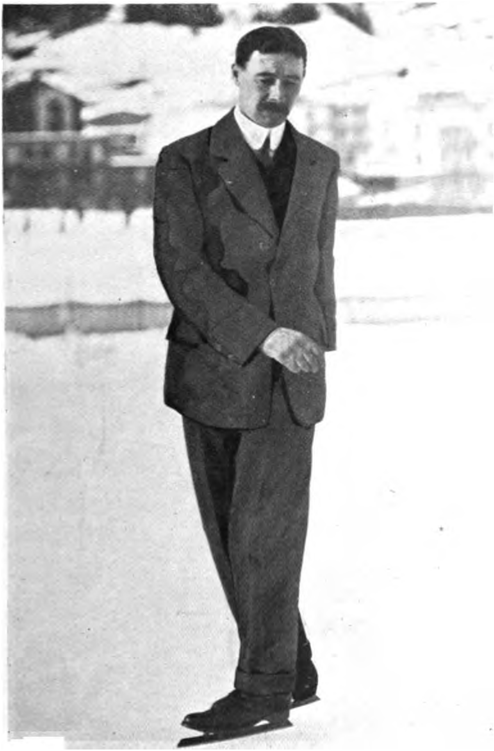
(The right foot has hitherto had a good deal of the skating; for a change the left shall lead. See photographs Nos. I, II, III.)

The skater should start his outside forward stroke in the manner already prescribed, which should now be familiar to him. He should not begin the stroke, knowing that a turn is coming, in a false position, already preparing for the turn, but begin as if no turn was ahead of him, and he was simply skating on the forward edge. His left shoulder, since he is skating on the left foot, should be leading, his head should be looking in the direction of his curve, his unemployed right foot should be dozing at the heel of his left, and he should be balanced on the back part of the skate, well behind the middle of it. And on the back part of the skate he has to remain both before and after the turn. It is conceivable that on the turn itself he may get forward as far as the middle of his skate, but under no circumstances must he get on the toe of the skate, nor even on the fore part of it. What he proposes to do is to turn on the unassisted left foot from the outside forward edge to the inside back edge, and travel comfortably and in the correct position on the inside back edge.

Moving forward then, well back on his skate, the moment comes when, after travelling in the correct attitude for outside forward edge, he must prepare for the turn, and shift the whole disposition of his body, without disturbing the evenness of his edge. And the head, as always, must begin this shifting.

He is travelling on the left foot and the head is thus facing in the direction of his left shoulder, which is leading. He must (though only for a moment) turn his head a little more to the left in order to start the right shoulder and the right side of the body generally on the movement it has to make. The whole body has to rotate on its own axis till the right shoulder is leading, and the right side of the body is leading instead of the left shoulder and the left side, which are pressed back by the simultaneous advance of the right. This twist of the body should, by the time it is complete, have communicated itself to the whole body down to the knee, at any rate, of the foot on which the turn is to be made: the left hip must be

PLATE I



BEFORE THE FORWARD TURN

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pressed back, and the whole frame turned outwards. This advance of the right shoulder must proceed simultaneously with the pressing back of the left; each movement helps the other. While it is going on the foot must continue to hold its edge, and remain uninfluenced by the shifting and rotation in progress above it. But as soon as this rotation is set up the head has done its work, and must be moved back from its momentary inclination towards the left till immediately before the turn it is facing full in front, as seen in photograph I.

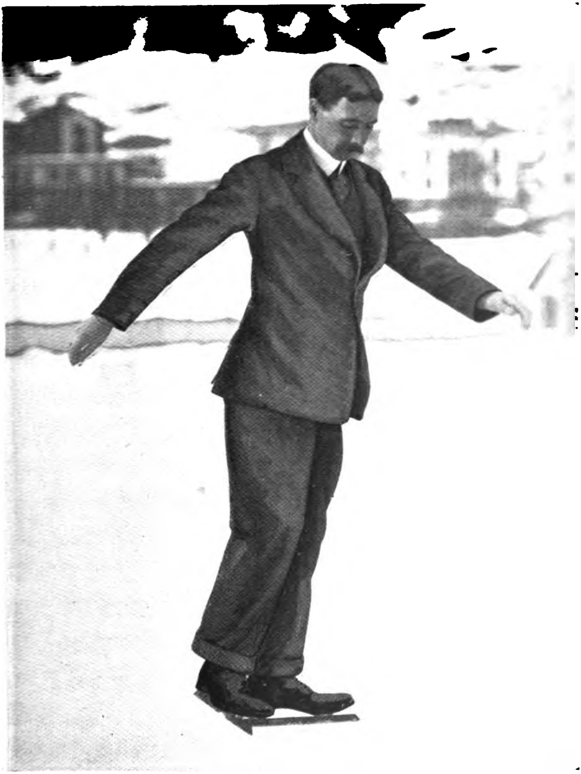
Now this rotation of the shoulders and body must be completed before the turn is made, and there checked, so that it does not even want to go any further. The right arm will be loosely swung across the front of the body (see photograph I) and the left arm pressed back.

Then (and it is this that makes the turn) the head must be brought to look over the right shoulder, and the right shoulder and right side of the body, which has been advanced, must be quickly pressed back again. The foot by this movement will whip round and find naturally and inevitably the inside back edge, for it is the only part of the whole frame that is not in the attitude for inside back edge already. The arms for the moment will fly out, owing to this stroke (for so it is) of the shoulders (photograph II), and this movement should neither be checked nor encouraged: they should be left quite limp, so that by their own weight they immediately fall back again into their natural position (photograph III). They will want to join in the fun and give a great jerk from the elbows on their own account, in order to help the turn, but they must not be permitted. Their movement must be only such as is inevitable from the work of the shoulders.

Such is the dissection and the bones of this first and simple turn, and since the same or parallel movements are the base of most (though not all) of the other turns, the pupil is recommended, though it may bore him, to read the above directions two or three times, and practise the positions shown in the photographs on the carpet, and, if possible, before a looking-glass. Photograph I shows the position before the turn, when the rotation of the body is complete and already arrested; photograph II shows the actual position the moment the turn has been made; photograph III shows the position when the head has been brought into its correct attitude for the inside back edge, when the right shoulder, which is forward and leading in photograph I, has been pressed back and leads again on the back inside edge, and when the arms, from having flown out on the turn itself, have by their weight merely fallen back into their proper position. The turn itself finally, when the preparation is complete, should be very quickly done, and the foot flicked round. If the preparation has been thorough this is easy; if not, it is impossible.

Now this turn is so typical of many others, that it

PLATE II



ON THE FORWARD TURN

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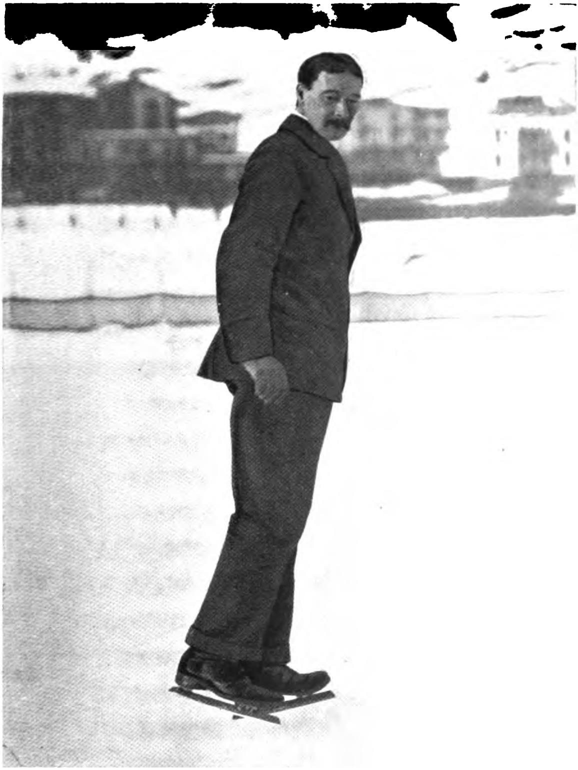
is worth while at this point to treat it somewhat fully. For this reason there are three photographs given of it, for it illustrates the whole system of turning, though in certain turns, as will be found later, the processes are reversed.

To begin then with photograph I.

The skater has originally started his edge with the left shoulder leading, and the head looking in the direction that the left shoulder has been pointing. But now, as will be observed, the preparation for the turn is complete, the whole body has rotated, and though he is still skating outside forward on the left foot the right shoulder leads. The right arm, in obedience to the dictates of the shoulder, has come round also, and is lying in a perfectly easy and natural position across the body, having given no muscular effort to add to the rotation. The head has already made its initial impulse, and, from looking strongly over the left shoulder, is on its way back, to look over the right again as soon as the turn is definitely accomplished, as is seen in photograph III. Again, in photographs I and III, the skater is clearly on the back part of his skate; in photograph II he appears on the middle of the skate, which, it will be remembered, was mentioned as the furthest forward part of the blade on which he will (or did) arrive.

Now the object of approaching this, and all other forward turns on the back of the skate, is not hard to understand when once it is explained. At the moment of turning there is clearly a check to the forward movement since the skate has to make a cusp on the ice, instead of running unimpeded forward. The weight and body of the skater will therefore tend during this moment (nor can it help so tending) to come more forward on the blade, since the momentary check to the blade is not felt by it, and it continues going on with the same movement that makes the tops of breaking waves curl over their base which is retarded by friction with the beach. If then this turn is approached anywhere but on the back part of the blade, the skater, after the turn, will be leaning more or less heavily on the fore part of the blade, and will then have to recover his upright position. This, as is seen in ninety-nine learners out of a hundred, he does by putting his unemployed leg out stiffly behind him, so that its weight brings him back on to the back part of the blade again, and enables him to recover the upright position. But if only the beginner will approach this, and all other forward turns, *well on the back of his skate*, the check that takes place at the turn will not throw him further forward than the centre of the blade, and when the turn is made, and he is on his inside back edge, he will not want to throw out the unemployed leg to bring him into the upright position again, for he will never have left it. But otherwise, inevitably, he will be on the fore part of his skate, leaning forward. Without the use of the so-called un-

PLATE III



AFTER THE FORWARD TURN

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employed leg, it is difficult to see how he can recover position again.

There is an old stock theory in connection with this, which, since the point will come in over and over again, I will do my best to explode at once. In all skating manuals, as far as I am aware, with the exception of Mr. Lowther's admirable little treatise on turns, the learner is recommended in this turn and in other forward turns to get on to his toe in order that his heel may come round without scraping the ice. Such a theory, apart from the hideous necessity it involves of having to get back on to the heel again, is altogether fallacious. Skates are ground on a uniform radius, and unless it is meant that the turn should be executed absolutely on the point of the skate, it is as easy to skate every turn on any one place in the blade as on any other. Wherever on the blade the forward turn is executed, the rest of the skate, both fore and aft, will come round with equal ease, and whether the turn is skated on the heel or the toe or anywhere in between, the curvature of the skate will keep all but the turning-point clear of the ice. But the fatal objection to skating any forward turn on the toe is that the turn places the skater even more on the toe. He will thus, if he chooses to skate it on the toe, have to make an acrobatic effort to recover his upright position. The antithetical proposition about the correct place on which to skate back turns will come in its proper order.

Now if the beginner has practised his inside back edge as recommended, he will be in a vastly superior position to him who has gone for the turn, which includes inside back edge, without knowing what the inside back edge means. After the turn, he will be already familiar with the proper position for inside-back. His right shoulder (the turn being made on the left foot) will much more easily follow the lead of the head, and point him smoothly backwards, no longer ignorant of what is expected of it. But there is one difficulty which at first assails everybody. The body has been rotated, this rotation is difficult to check, and at first every one will find that it tends to continue after the turn has been made, with the result that the skater (starting on the left foot) finds his right shoulder still coming forward, and his left shoulder still going back after the turn has been made and he is travelling on the inside back. But that—though it is subsequently of use in learning another turn, the most difficult of all the simple turns—must be firmly checked. He must make his rotation of the body complete before the turn, so that the rotatory movement has ceased, and, as has been said, he has got his right shoulder back again on the turn itself. He will thus, and thus only, be able to turn the foot by itself without increasing his rotation. He must practise this till, travelling on the inside back (on the left foot), he is looking in the direction of his backward progress, and is ready with the unemployed right foot to strike not backwards but forwards. *His head, shoulder and body must be turned, so that travelling on the inside back his right foot is ready to strike out on to an outside forward, as is shown in photograph III.*

It is not meant that the skater should go on practising turns on his left foot till he gets this perfect position. Both feet must be simultaneously educated, but at the end it is hoped that whether he skates on the right foot or on the left, the finish of his inside back edge will find him in a comfortable position for striking on to the outside forward edge. Let him do that without thought of what is to follow, and assume the correct position for outside forward edge. Let him practise this strike (still without thought of the horrors in store), until it comes quite comfortably. Then let him dwell on his edge, observing the rules for the correct carriage of the body, and then let him prepare quickly and smoothly for a turn on the foot he is skating on. Let him, to put it brutally, skate forward threes alternately on each foot.

And finally, while he is slowly assimilating this, let him remember (for the fourth time, I think) that the preparation for his turn cannot be too complete, but that the turn when it comes cannot be executed too swiftly. There is only the foot itself to be brought round, the rest of the body is ready.

The variety of it all increases at every step. The beginner now is supposed to be able to skate both edges either forward or backward, and to make a forward turn. With the application and adjustment of what he thus already knows, the fields for fresh achievement open. And first let him have done with the changes of edge, and while still playing with the forward turn proceed to conquer the back changes. This manœuvre will also tell tremendously in the first step of combined figures.

Outside Back Change

Let the skater make a forward turn, as fast as he is able, and, instead of assuming the correct attitude for the inside back, let him spare himself all that trouble, and—skating on the right foot—put down his left foot on outside back, parallel to the right foot which is skating inside back after the turn. But this is the edge that must be carefully treated.

The change of foot should present no difficulty. The right foot is on an inside back, and as soon as that has been reached, *via* the turn, the left foot should be put down parallel to the right, continuing the same curve. Then—the trouble of assuming the inside back attitude being spared—the left foot on its outside back should take heed. The correct attitude, looking towards the right shoulder, with the right shoulder leading, must be assumed, and the edge should be maintained for four or five yards. Then exactly the same process as on the forward changes should be gone through; the head should lead the movement and tilt over towards the right across the line of the curve that is in progress. The moment after the head has led the movement, the right shoulder should follow it and come a little forward in correct position for the inside back edge. This having once started, the movement of the body naturally follows, and the inside back curve cannot help beginning.

Here again, as in the forward edges, a change of balance, aided by the unemployed leg, and an accentuation of the curve, assists the movement, but must not be indulged in. If the skater swings his unemployed leg out backwards, just as on the forward change he was wrongly recommended to swing it out in front, he will find the change so easy that it is not worth making. But by the rules of the game he must not do this, for the unemployed leg has to be unemployed and not interfere. The sideways swing of the body across the direction of progress must be made with the gradual shifting of the weight described at length in the forward edges.

Practice should also be given to the correct way of starting this outside back edge by means, namely, of turning a three on one foot and dropping on to the outside back edge of the other. By degrees the learner will find that by putting into practice what has already been said about the making of a stroke, he can get a definite stroke with a good deal of pace out of this.

To make a stroke with speed, it will be remembered, it was necessary to shove off from the inside edge of one foot, and at the same time to make a body swing. This is exactly what he must do here. After making his three, and getting on an inside back on the right foot, he must press his weight against that edge, as he puts down the other foot on about the middle of the skate. Simultaneously with the same body swing, spoken of before, he must incline his body backwards till his balance is on the back part of the skate, which is the correct place to travel on. And for his further encouragement he may know that this three, followed by the outside back stroke, is not only the right way of getting on to outside back, but is none other than the mystic "once back" of combined figure-skating.

Change from Inside Back to Outside Back

Let the skater again execute his forward turn, and then strike from the inside back edge on to a fresh stroke of inside back, as he has already learned to do in skating the ordinary inside back. Then let him assume the correct position for that edge, with his head looking in the direction of his curve, and his right shoulder, if he is now on his left foot, leading. Then analogously to the other changes let his head come up to the vertical with the right shoulder following it and being consciously pressed a little more back. The vertical position, coinciding with the momentary travelling on the flat of the skate, should be passed over as quickly as possible, and the sideways pendulum-swing be allowed to carry the skater over on to the outside back edge. This is the most difficult of all the changes, for the head and the shoulder of the unemployed have to be shifted more than in any other change, and the beginner will certainly find it hard to pass over the blade of his skate, and will find at first that he tends to side-slip at this point. The probable reason for this is that he is not far enough back on his skate, and he should, as he begins to prepare for the change, consciously get his heel below him so that his weight is well over it. The least movement in the way of a backward swing with his unemployed foot would of course bring him into the desired position without difficulty, but he is strongly recommended not to help himself by starting a habit which he will have to get rid of afterwards.

Finally, before the long chapter on turns begins, it may be well to get rid of the two remaining eights, leaving the mohawks and choctaws, though they are, strictly speaking, strokes, to be spoken of in connection with the particular turns which they resemble.

Outside Back Eight on the Cross-roll

One circle of this eight should be skated on the ordinary outside back and brought into the centre, just opposite which and short of which the fresh stroke should be taken on the cross-roll.

Now, though it is very important to skate in the correct attitude, which here (*i.e.*, on the right foot outside back) demands that the left shoulder should lead and the head be looking over it in the direction of progress, the skater will find that if he, immediately on taking this stroke, brings his head and shoulder round into their correct positions, he will be thrown on to a hard and curly edge which will never reach its centre. He is advised therefore not to get at once into the school-attitude, but for a little while after he has taken up this cross-stroke *to continue looking towards the centre over his right shoulder*, where he was looking at the end of the stroke on the left foot. When he has travelled perhaps a yard he should begin to get his body and shoulders into the correct position, beginning the adjustment with his head, so that when he is half-way round the circle this adjustment shall have been made, and he is looking over his left shoulder. After that he must not strain the attitude, or turn his head too far round, in order to get the earliest possible view of the centre, but wait until it naturally comes in sight, which should be when he has completed three-quarters of his circle. At this moment, though he has been travelling, it is to be hoped, on the back part of his skate, he should try to get a little more on the heel, ready for the cross-stroke, which, as in the ordinary outside back, is a mixture of shove-off and body-swing. He must remember, also, that a large portion of the impetus is derived from the foot that is going to leave the ice, and that this shove-off passes along the outside of the blade of the skate, from heel to toe, in a *crescendo*. As he approaches the centre on this right foot, the head will be looking over the left shoulder, and there it should continue to look until again about a yard of the fresh circle has been traversed. By this plan, also, two looks at the centre are provided for, one on leaving it, and one on approaching it. Otherwise the skater is blind to the centre from the moment of his leaving it until it begins to appear in the last quarter of the circle, and this extra look at it is invaluable, since in skating to a centre it is most desirable to know where the centre is.

This figure should be practised until the skater can with ease make circles of at least six feet in diameter.

Inside Back Eight

Though the skater is not in this eight beset by the difficulty peculiar to the last one, consisting in the fact that the centre has to be lost sight of, it is a harder eight to skate well, owing to the difficulty of the stroke itself. It is begun most neatly by skating a forward turn up to the centre, and there striking on to the inside back edge, in the manner prescribed in the instructions about the inside back edge, *i.e.*, with a backward swing of the body, and a shove-off from the inside edge of the foot leaving the ice.

Now it may be remembered that in skating the ordinary inside back, the skater was recommended to turn his head on, if not just before, the new stroke, so that it was already in position for the stroke when the stroke was taken. But here, for the same reason as was given in the outside back cross-roll eight, he is recommended to keep his head in the wrong position, looking towards the spot he has just left, till he has traversed some couple of yards of his circle, so that he may not be inclined to skate too hard an edge. The readjustment of the shoulders will immediately follow, so that by the time he is half-way round the circle he is in the correct position, and looking along the curve which will lead back to the centre.

On approaching the centre he should take care to bring his edge quite up to, or, as Mr. H. C. Lowther recommends, a shade past it, so as to run no risk of kicking his orange with the foot that is leaving the ice on the stroke with the other foot, which he may easily do if he strikes while short of the centre. It is very important to keep this edge light, and to check all rotation of the body, which in the inside-back (most of all edges) entirely spoils correct striking. The circles described should be not less than nine feet in diameter.

Summary

The skater is now fairly familiar with the following figures:

(i) The four edges and back cross-roll.
(ii) Eights on all these edges.
(iii) The four changes.
(iv) Forward turn.
(v) Once back.
(vi) Forward turn and inside back.

There has also been reserved a sort of bonus for him, and he is respectfully informed that if he can skate his changes and his forward turn correctly, he should with hardly any further practice be master of

(vii) Inside forward Q.
(viii) Forward reverse Q.

The manner of which is as follows.

Let him skate his inside forward change as well as he can and as fast as he can, taking no thought for what is coming, but being particularly careful to get on to a correct outside forward edge after the change. When he has got quite steady on that, let him prepare to do a three, and having prepared, let him do it. He has then done what is known as an inside forward Q. He should try to hold his inside-back edge till his original impetus has quite died away.

He will find little more difficulty in doing the forward reverse Q. Here he starts on a forward edge with as great a pace as is convenient to his power of steadiness, makes his turn, and after a nice tail to it on the inside back, changes on to outside back. He had better get on good terms with these two simple combinations of what he has already learned, as soon as possible. He will see a great deal of them.

At this period he is recommended to begin studying the first chapters on Combined Skating, p. 171. He will find the elementary figures not too difficult for him, and will learn more about the further strikes in skating. For the sake of orderly arrangement the chapter is placed later, at the beginning of the section on Combined Skating, but the learner is now at a stage when he may study it, and begin to practise what it lays down.

CHAPTER IV

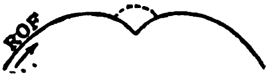
The other simple turns—The four rockers.

IT will by now be generally conceded that there are two forward edges and two back edges; all the forward edges can be joined to back edges by means of turns, and all the back edges to forward edges by the same means. We are therefore at once confronted with eight turns that can be made on each foot. These are

I. *Simple Turns*

(i) Outside forward to inside back. (C turn.)
(ii) Inside forward to outside back. (A turn.)
(iii) Outside back to inside forward. (D turn.)
(iv) Inside back to outside forward. (B turn.)

These four are called the simple turns, and are known also by the names of C turn, A turn, etc., given in brackets. Why they were thus called I have not been able to find out, and indeed this nomenclature is perhaps growing a little obsolete, except in the case of the inside back turn which is commonly known as the B turn. The others are generally alluded to as the outside forward turn (or forward turn), the inside forward turn, etc. They are all of the same shape, namely:



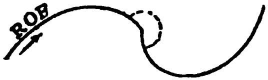
(FIG. 1)

There are also four other turns where the edge before the turn is the same as the edge after the turn. These are

II. *Rockers*

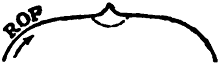
(v) Outside forward to outside back.
(vi) Inside forward to inside back.
(vii) Outside back to outside forward.
(viii) Inside back to inside forward.

These are called rocking-turns or more usually rockers, and are all of the same shape, approximately



(FIG. 2)

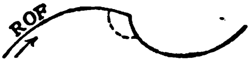
Now when a simple turn or three (so-called from its shape) is skated, the body revolves in the curve indicated by the dotted lines, *i.e.*, *outside* the direction of its curve, and in the rockers it revolves the same way. But it is possible to make the body revolve on the other side of the direction of its curve. All the simple turns, that is to say, can be skated, so to speak, inside out, and all the rockers can be skated inside out. This gives rise to four more turns analogous to the four simple turns enumerated above, in which the body revolves the contrary way to that in which the revolution takes place in the simple turns. These four turns are known as the four brackets, and are shaped thus



(FIG. 3)

the dotted line again showing the revolution of the body. They, too, are started on any edge backwards or forwards, and turn on to the opposite edge in the opposite direction.

Rockers similarly can be skated with this contrary revolution, and can be skated from any forward or back edge to the same back or forward edge. They will be shaped approximately like rockers, and again the dotted line shows the field of the body's revolution. They are called counter-rocking turns, or more generally counters. There are, of course, four of these starting on the four different edges and turning on to the same edge (as in rockers) in the opposite direction.



(FIG. 4)

In all, this makes sixteen turns that can be (and must be) skated on each foot. Since in eight of these (the simple turns and the rockers) the revolution of the body, which is the characteristic of the turn, and constitutes its difficulty, is made in the same direction, *i.e.*, outside the curve, these will be treated together, while the brackets and counters will be spoken of afterwards.

Inside Forward Turn

The outside forward turn has already been spoken of at length, and we will go on at once to the inside forward turn, where the edge taken up after the turn is the outside back. The skater should start on an inside forward edge at sufficient pace to allow him to get quite steady and comfortable on it before he makes any preparation for his turn. His tendency, since he is going to practise a new turn, is always to start very slowly and whirl his body round somehow before he has really got on to an edge at all, with a view partly to get the terrifying moment over as soon as possible, partly in order not to give himself a chance of making the turn while he is travelling at all fast. But nobody wants him to make the turn while he is travelling at all fast; he may continue his inside forward edge till he is going quite slowly, but what he is strongly recommended to do is to attempt to turn after he has travelled properly on his inside forward edge, and not to turn without ever assuming his proper travelling attitude for the edge, for this will result, not in a true turn, but a more or less scratchy swing.

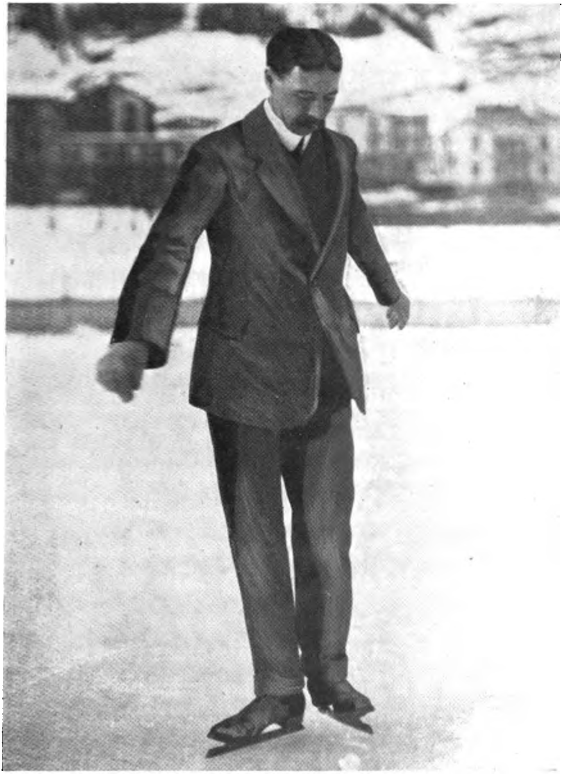
Let him then travel on an inside forward edge in the prescribed attitude and well back on his skate. He is on his right foot, let us say, his right shoulder is therefore leading, and his head is looking towards the direction of his curve. Then he has to prepare for his turn. Again (as always) the head should start the game, and from looking over his right shoulder should turn to the left until it is looking towards the left shoulder. As soon as the head begins to move, the right shoulder should follow it, which must lead on to the whole body down to the knee being turned. As this advance of the right side proceeds, the left side from shoulder to the end of the unemployed foot must recede, moving round on the axis of the body. All the time this revolution is going on, the edge (inside forward) should be proceeding without deviation: should this shifting of the weight cause it to get unsteady, to bring it on to a very hard curve or make it lose its edge altogether, the skater should begin again. It is of the highest importance to keep the edge clean. During this readjustment the coming forward of the right side of the body will tend at first to throw the skater on the fore-part of his skate. This he must refuse to acquiesce in, and consciously lean back (still not getting frightened about the turn itself) till he has recovered his balance and is travelling well on the back part of his skate.

Then, when he is on the back part of his skate, when his head is no longer looking in the direction of the forward curve, but along the curve he has already made, when his right shoulder has come round as far as it can so that he can barely hold the edge, and when the left shoulder has correspondingly receded, he is prepared for making the turn, and the turn is made by letting the ankle follow its inclination and relaxing the tension put on it. What frees the foot, and gives it the turning impulse, is in this and in every other turn the reversal of the shoulders which always takes place on a turn. The final impulse to the foot is given by them. The foot, the only thing left, whips round, off its inside forward edge, and—what does it find? That the whole of the body above it is practically in the attitude for the outside back edge. Whether it is a wise foot or a stupid one (most are stupid) it will acquiesce in the inevitable and go there too.

Photograph IV shows the moment before the turn. It is difficult, looking at it, to see that it is an inside forward that the right foot is skating, so much has the body turned. But how easily will it become an outside back.

Now, in this turn it is quite clear that there is more turning of the head and body to be done after the turn is made, for the skater has to get into proper position for the outside back edge. His left shoulder (when skating on the right foot) must lead, and the head look towards it. Since we are not parrots, we cannot look straight down our backs, and it will not be till after the turn is accomplished that the head can get

PLATE IV



INSIDE FORWARD TURN, BEFORE TURN

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round and again look in the direction of progress. Nor, though the left shoulder and left side of the body have done their best, can they be quite in the correct position for outside back, simply because we are not made that way. It follows then that further rotation has to be made after the turn, to bring the body into the right position for outside back. The most the head can do before the turn is to be looking in the direction from which it has come, and though the turn assists its further rotation, it has eventually to look even more round, while the left shoulder, which has to lead on the outside back, must be brought further round also. Now if, after the turn, the head is brought very quickly round, the effect will be to throw the skater on to a hard outside back curve. He is recommended, therefore, again to take up the theoretically wrong attitude, and continue for a yard or so after the turn to look in the direction from which he has been coming until a light and steady edge is established. Then, slowly, he must look round again with the shoulder following the lead of the head till he is travelling on outside back in the position which ought now to be familiar.

The crucial points in the turn are these:

(i) Turn the head, shoulder, and body as far as possible before the turn, in order to leave as little rotation as possible to be done after the turn.

(ii) Get well on the back of the skate before the turn. Otherwise the turn will throw you on to the fore-part of the skate, and you will wildly wave an unemployed leg.

(iii) Make the preparation for the turn after your first edge has become comfortable.

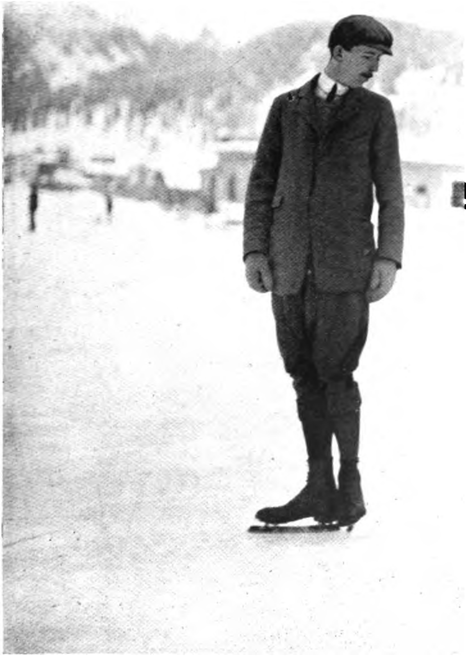
(iv) Remember also that the body has to come further round in this turn than in the outside forward turn, so that the preparation for it will take longer.

(v) Do not assume correct position on the outside back directly after the turn is made, but delay it for a few yards.

Outside Back Turn

The turn here has to be made from outside back to inside forward, and the learner is again advised to begin practising it correctly, that is to say, he should get on to a firm outside back edge, say on the right foot, as in photograph V, and travel some yards on it before thinking about the turn at all, and not as soon as he gets on to his edge screw round for all he is worth, and make the turn as quickly as possible. On this edge his body and head should be turned in the direction of progress, his head, that is to say, should be looking towards the left shoulder which is leading, while he should be travelling on the back part of the skate. Before the turn, however, he should allow himself to get a shade more forward on the skate, for a reason that will presently be apparent, but in no case, at

PLATE V



OUTSIDE BACK TURN, BEFORE TURN

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whatever speed he is travelling, should he get further forward than the centre of the skate.

Now if he will do this, he will find that the further preparation necessary for the turn is very slight; he must turn his head a little more over the left shoulder, letting the right shoulder and right side of the body follow it, and come a little more forward, and he will find that there is very little adjustment to be made before he feels that the whole of his body is striving for the proper attitude for the inside forward edge. He must then, as before, release the tension on his foot, which will obey the inclination of the weight above it and will whip round. How small the amount of readjustment is between the proper attitude for outside back and the attitude required the moment before this turn can be seen from a study of photograph V. All that one can say is that the skater is travelling in a slightly exaggerated position for outside back; the position of his head and shoulders, though correct, is a shade exaggerated. Yet at the moment the photograph was taken he was already in the position for the turn, and all preparation had been made. He is travelling also, it will be noticed, right on the centre of his blade, the position recommended. And the reason for it is this:

It will be remembered that in making the forward turn the skater was told to travel on the back part of his blade, because the turn would cause a slight check and would rock him forward. For this reason he had to be well back, so that he should not find himself on his toe after the turn, and have to recover balance again. But in making the back turn, the turn again will make a momentary check, and, since he is going backwards, tend to rock him back. Thus if he approaches the turn in the centre of the blade, he will find himself after the turn on the back part of the blade, which is just where he should be for the inside forward edge.

The turn itself then is not difficult: what is difficult is the edge after it. At first the learner will find that he is continually coming on to a hard inside forward edge, which curls rapidly in, and the reason for this is that he is bringing his right shoulder, which must lead after the turn, too quickly into position. Instead, let him, as soon as the turn is made (if he is skating on his right foot), consciously keep his right shoulder back for a yard or two,[1] allowing the left shoulder to lead, and not till then finish the revolution of the body. Let him in fact stay for this yard or two in the position he was on the turn itself, with the left shoulder still leading. After that, as the right side of the body comes into its proper place, the left side must go slowly back. The outside back edge before the turn, it may be added, should be arrived at by a "once back."

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[1] This "yard or two" is only approximate; when the skater learns to make his turn at high speed he will require a much greater distance.

Inside Back Turn

This turn is by far the most difficult of the simple turns, and indeed many skaters find it harder than any of the sixteen, with the exception of the back bracket and back counter, owing to the amount of rotation the head and body have to accomplish before they are in position for the turn. It is so hard, indeed, for the learner to realize how much rotation is required that he may be permitted, until he begins to get the feel of it, to practise it in the wrong way, with the distinct proviso that as soon as he gets any inkling of it, he begins to practise it in the right way.

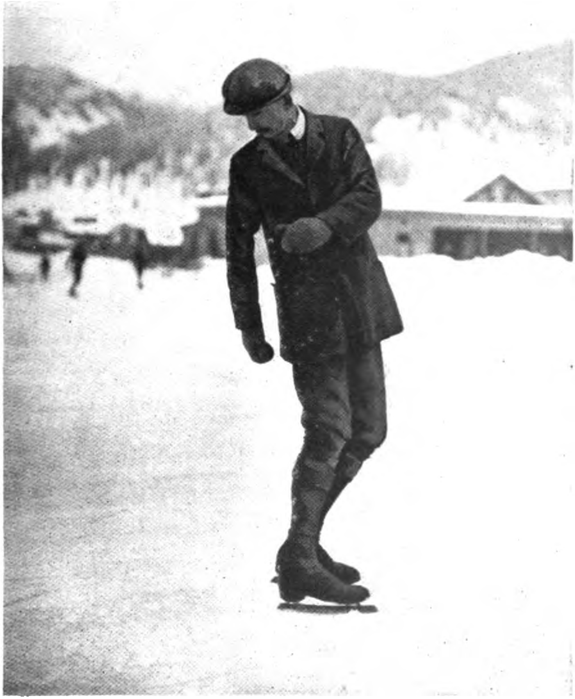
Let him then (this is the wrong way) turn an ordinary forward three on the right foot, and make no effort to check the rotation of his body which was necessary in the preparation for the turn, but let it continue after he is on the inside back edge. Let him, however, for his own safety get well back on his skate on the inside back edge.

Now if he lets this rotation go unchecked, he will find that after a yard or so (on the inside back edge) he is not looking over his left shoulder (which should be leading) but over his right shoulder, which is leading. Let him encourage this rotation till he can barely hold his inside back edge, and finds that looking towards his right shoulder (while travelling on the right foot) *he can see the heel of the skate on which he is travelling.* When he can do that he has got his body and head about round enough, and by releasing the tension on his foot can turn on to an outside forward edge. His head in fact must be looking in the direction of his progress over the wrong shoulder, for on the inside edge backwards it should be looking towards his left shoulder in the direction of its curve, while when the preparation for this turn is complete, it is looking in the same direction, but towards the right shoulder.

Then, having got some idea of his position, let him at once humbly apologize to the forward turn for having so ill-used it, skate a forward turn or two properly, by way of amends, and set to work in the right manner.

Now, by the "right manner" is of course meant that he should start (as he has done on all other turns) on an inside back without rotation and in the proper position for that edge, with the head looking in the direction of progress, and with the left shoulder (if the edge is on the right foot) leading. The skater may get on to that edge either by a forward turn on one foot and an inside back on the other, or if he prefers, a forward turn (as in the incorrect method of learning) on one foot, followed by a proper holding of the inside back edge in the correct position, instead of letting the rotation of the turn start him in his preparation for the inside back turn. Then having travelled a few yards on his inside back, let him prepare for the turn, after carefully studying photograph VI, which shows the skater on the inside back of the right foot ready

PLATE VI



INSIDE BACK TURN, BEFORE TURN

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for the turn. He should also look at photograph VII, which shows very admirably the position on the left foot, which has to be passed through before the preparation is as complete as in photograph VI.

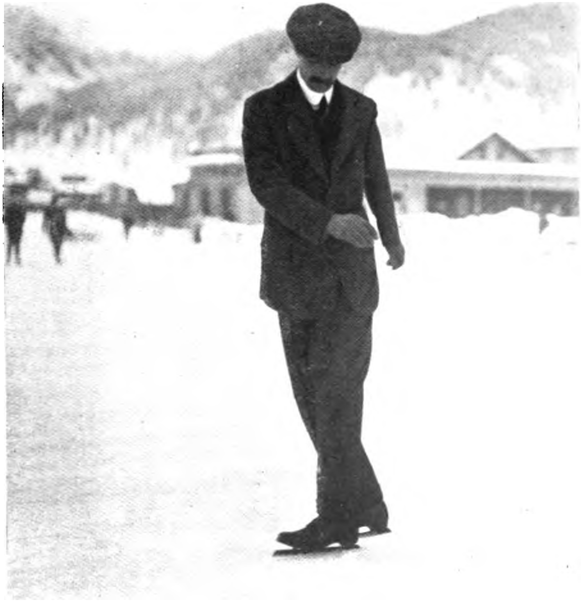
The skater is travelling on the section of the skate between the centre and the heel: he must not yet be quite on his heel, because the check from the turn is considerable, and will rock him farther back on it. He must then begin his preparation with the head, turning it from its position looking in the line of the left shoulder right round till, as in photograph VI, it is looking clean over the right shoulder. As in other turns the shoulder must begin to follow the head as soon as the lead has been given, the left arm will swing right across the body, and the right arm be thrown a little out and back with the strong pressing back of the right shoulder until the heel of the skater is in full view. That is the moment to make the turn. But if you feel you are not on the back part of the skate, do not attempt it, but begin again: to try to make the turn while leaning forward and on the front part of the skate, means to fall for certain: there is no saving it. Only, if you propose to fall, do not try to save yourself, as advised before, by putting out an arm. Be content to fall limply and resignedly.

Now the difficulty of the turn is not over even when the turn is made; it is very hard to hold a good outside forward edge afterwards. Mr. Lowther very acutely suggests that the strained feeling that follows on the outside forward is due to bringing the foot too far round, and in many cases this is no doubt true. The cusp of the turn, as he puts it, should not be too open. Another reason, I think, is that the body having been so strongly turned is apt to press on to its forward edge too much, with the result that the edge is a hard and curly one.

Another point to be observed in both these photographs is the slight drop of the shoulder corresponding to the employed foot, and the resulting kink in that side of the body. This certainly helps the turn immensely, if the skater is supple enough to be able to acquire it, and it gives also to the performance a look of spring and elasticity which it lacks if the shoulders are kept quite level.

This B turn is a very difficult turn to learn, and one that causes more falls than any except the more wicked varieties of brackets and counters. But many of these falls will be avoided if the skater will not attempt the turn, or try to get round "somehow" when he knows he is not in the right position for it. To fall constantly over the same turn allows it to establish a "funk," which it will take weeks to get rid of again when once it has been set up.

PLATE VII



INSIDE BACK TURN, LEFT FOOT, BEFORE TURN

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YORK

Rocking Turns or Rockers

This beautiful and interesting class of turns seems to have been the last introduced in the skater's repertoire, it having been first skated apparently by Mr. M. Monier-Williams and Mr. W. R. Pigeon in the years 1878-1881.

Like the simple turns, the rockers are skated from every edge, and the body is revolved in the same direction as in the simple turns; but whereas in the latter the edge after the turn is on the opposite side of the skate to that on which it was travelling before, in the rockers no change of edge is made and the skate does not, as in the simple turns, pass over the flat of the blade. Thus the turns are from outside edge in one direction to outside in the opposite direction, and from inside to inside.

Outside forward Rocker

The turn is approached and prepared for in exactly the same way as the forward three, but the preparation necessary for the forward three in the matter of rotation of the body is not sufficient for the rocker. In photograph VIII the skater is shown the moment before the turn is made, and it will be seen at once that the body and shoulders are much more round than in the corresponding position before the forward three in photograph I. It is impossible in the rocker to get too far round before the turn: it is also impossible to skate it at all if at the moment of turning the rotation of the body has not ceased altogether.

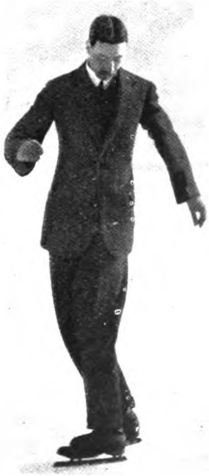
Following the photograph we will see exactly what the preparation has been. The skater is on the left foot and well on the back of his skate, but the body has come round so far that the right shoulder is actually pointing along the direction of the forward curve, while the left shoulder, though the body is in full face, is barely visible. The head is no longer looking in the direction of its progress, but straight in front of it. The turn is imminent, and will be made in an inch or two; and though the turn itself is perfectly easy (the whole difficulty of this turn lying in the ability to hold the ensuing outside back edge), the crucial point is the turn itself, and what happens *at* that moment and not a fraction of a second later, for that is too late. On the turn, then (made on the left foot), while the skate is actually going round,

(i) the head will instantly look strongly towards the right shoulder;

(ii) the right shoulder (at the same moment as the head), which is now so far forward, will be thrown as far as possible back so that it again leads on the outside back edge;

(iii) the body will consciously lean backwards a moment, not in the direction of its outside back curve, but straight back, so that the outside back edge may, so to speak, be driven into the ice.

Plate VIII



FORWARD ROCKER, JUST BEFORE TURN

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Now these things are a question of very accurate timing, and if they are done a fraction of a second too late the natural edge, *i.e.*, inside back, will already have established itself, and the most that can be made out of a bad job is to wobble on to the outside back. Then will ensue a series of contortions: the arms will wave and the unemployed leg will refuse to stop at heel, but will be brandished like a banner in fighting the victorious inside-back. And it is the failure to execute the three manœuvres specified soon enough that leads to these interminable wrestlings. In most turns, if the preparation has been thorough, there is nothing left to do after the turn except quietly readjust the attitude: in rockers the difficulties chiefly occur after the turn is made. But they must be provided for chiefly before the turn is made, and on the turn itself.

At first it seems quite impossible to hold the second edge, and even when it is held there remains for some time an almost inevitable tendency (the rocker being skated on the left foot) to allow the left shoulder to lead. The body will tend to curl the wrong way, till, though travelling on the outside back, the left shoulder is leading, and the attitude becomes what is known as a counter position. This position is an extremely difficult one to acquire at will; it is only easy to acquire it involuntarily after a rocker. It will be spoken of later.

Finally, with regard to the actual skating of the turn, it is immensely important to get the foot round as far as possible; the angle between the forward and backward edge should be as large as the skater is able to make it.

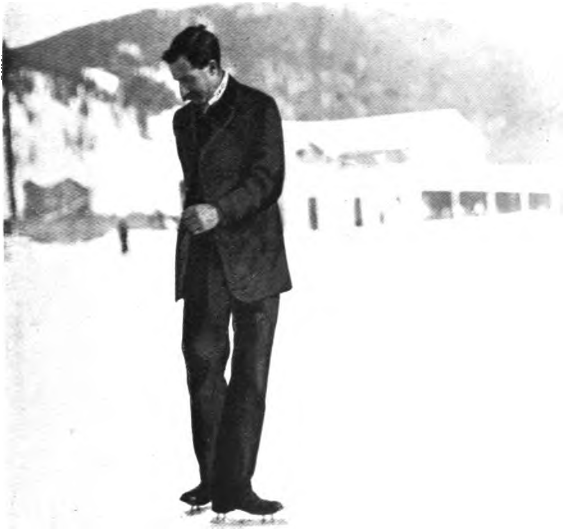
Now long after—in fact, ever after—the skater is able to pass in the rocker from one forward edge on to the same back edge, when all his struggling to regain his outside back after letting the inside back creep in, is over, he will observe with dismay (if he is not informed) that if he examines the traces of his turn on the ice, a piece of inside back apparently occurs directly after the turn. But he need not feel any dismay about it; this short piece of opposed curve, which looks like inside back, is not inside back at all, but a piece of forced outside back occasioned by the very nature of the turn. It is impossible to skate a rocker without some trace of this opposing curve coming in (though the skate, so far from getting on to the wrong edge, has never even got on to the flat), unless the motion is absolutely checked at the turn, and the body by means of a kick put into the new position. One is naturally shy about stating that to skate a true rocker without this piece of apparently opposed edge coming in is impossible, but it seems certain that it is not only a difficulty, but a mathematical impossibility. The skater will know very well by the feel of his turn whether he has ever left the outside edge; and he may, to convince himself further, carefully watch another skater make the turn, and though his eyes rightly and positively assure him that there has been no loss of edge, he will, if he examine the marks, find that the opposing curve is there. He may also, if still unconvinced, take any two-edged blade, his skate or the curved back of a pen-knife, and with it trace on some surface which will show the mark (best of all a waxed surface, so that the edge will bite in a little), a turn executed in the manner of a rocker, and he will find that though he inclines his blade over on to a very hard edge, the opposing curve will be made in exactly the same manner. Further, if he examines the trace of his own skate on the ice, or of any rocker which has been properly executed, he will find that the groove in the ice is continuous and has no break in it. Now, if he had struck an inside edge after the turn, he would have had, in order to get on to the outside, to pass over the flat of the blade. At that spot (as he can see whenever he changes edge) there would be a break in the cut edge, for when the skate is moving on the flat it does not practically make any groove in the ice at all. If, then, there had been a change of edge, this break would have been there, but it is not. On the other hand, if he skates a bad rocker, *i.e.*, gets on to the inside back a moment after the turn and then on to the outside, he will find that this break is there. An analogous piece of opposed edge, as will be seen, occurs also in counters and brackets.

Inside Forward Rocker

Just as the forward rocker was approached in the same manner as the forward three, so the inside forward rocker must be set about in the same manner as the inside forward three. But, as in the other, the preparation for the rocker must be carried further than in the inside forward turn; it must also be approached well back on the skate, and it is more than ever imperative that all rotation should cease before the turn, else the subsequent edge cannot be held. The foot here, as in the outside rocker, should be turned round as far as possible.

Two illustrations are given of this turn, one before (No. IX) and one (No. X) just after the turn, and they are worth careful study. The skater has been travelling on his left foot with the head originally looking over the left shoulder, which has been leading. But at this moment (No. IX), when the preparation for the turn is complete, the head and body have been so far turned round, that the head is looking at the ice it has already traversed, and the right shoulder has more than crossed the direction of the forward curve. Then, as we see from photograph X, the foot has come round tremendously, and though the turn has been made, the head is still looking in the backward direction, as was recommended in the case of the inside forward turn, in order not to get on to a hard back edge. A moment later the head will come round

PLATE IX



INSIDE FORWARD ROCKER, JUST BEFORE TURN, LEFT FOOT

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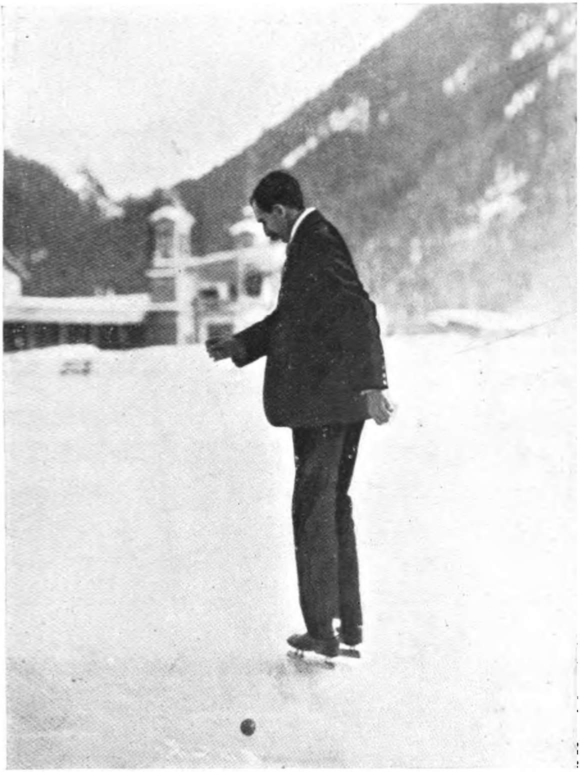
PLATE X



INSIDE FORWARD ROCKER, JUST AFTER TURN,
LEFT FOOT

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till it looks towards the right shoulder in the direction of progress, and the right shoulder again will lead. It will be noticed also how far back on the skate is the skater in photograph IX; in X it will be seen that the turn has rocked him forward to about the middle of it.

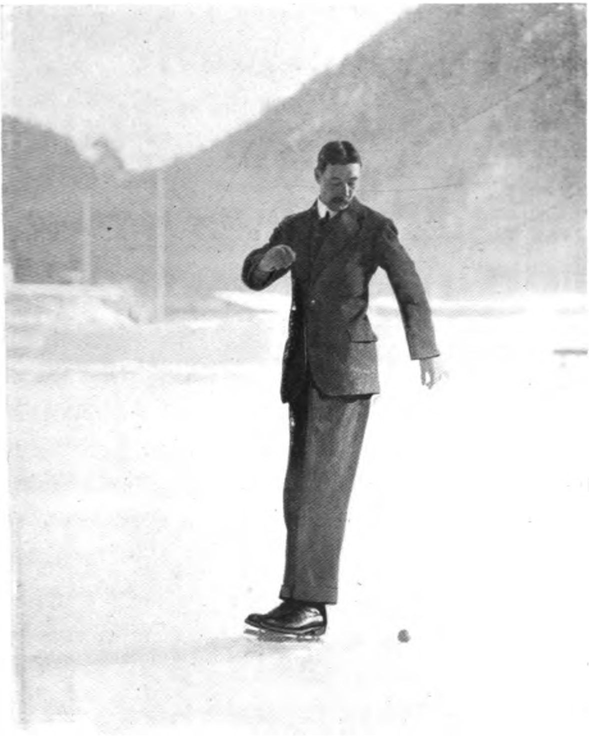
This turn itself is a little more difficult to make than the outside forward rocker, just as the inside forward turn is more difficult to most people than the outside, but the turn once made, it is far easier to hold the subsequent edge than was the case in the outside forward rocker, and that, I think, is because there is, on the inside edge back, no need to throw the body backwards to drive the edge into the ice. Indeed, here, the difficulty is not so much to keep on the second edge as to keep it light, and not curl in on it. This is best avoided by getting the foot as far round as possible on the turn, and by not beginning to assume the correct position for inside back until a yard or two of the edge has been traversed.

Outside Back Rocker

This is by far the easiest of all the rockers, and is certainly easier to skate at high speed than is the corresponding turn from outside back to inside forward, in which, it may be remembered, the chief difficulty was not to get too hard on to the inside forward edge. But in this corresponding rocker there is no such difficulty; it is the easiest of all the rockers, and certainly the easiest of all the back turns.

It has to be approached (photograph XI) in the same way as the outside back turn. The head (if it is skated, as in the photograph, on the right foot) must be looking in the direction of its curve, while the left shoulder leads. As the turn approaches, this attitude proper to the outside back edge must be a little accentuated, the head being a little more turned, the left shoulder being brought more round to the left, and the right shoulder advancing under the impulse given by the head. The body should be upright, and the skater travelling a shade behind the centre of his skate. Then on the turn itself the right shoulder should be brought at once into its position, *i.e.*, leading on the outside forward edge, and the foot turned round as far as possible. After the turn there is no further adjustment required, for the head is already looking in its proper direction, and with the advance on the turn of the right shoulder the left falls naturally into place. No skater who has mastered the outside back turn should have the slightest difficulty in learning this rocker; the only new factor in it is the further bringing round of the foot, which, if the body is in the position shown in the photograph, is a perfectly easy matter, while the subsequent outside forward edge is far easier to hold lightly than the corresponding inside edge.

PLATE XI



OUTSIDE BACK ROCKER, JUST BEFORE TURN

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Inside Back Rocker

No photograph is given of this difficult turn, because the preparation for it is in every respect identical with the preparation for the inside back turn. It is impossible in that turn to get the head, shoulders, and body round too far, and so no further rotation is possible for this rocker.

The position has been already learned over the inside back turn, and the skater should not therefore allow himself any parleyings with the outside forward turn in order to set up rotation, but practise this rocker straight from the inside back edge. As in the turn, it is necessary to get the whole body completely round, so that if the right foot is being skated on, the head is looking over the right shoulder, and the eyes can see the heel of the travelling foot. At this moment, *i.e.*, that of turning, when this preparation is complete, a difference comes in. The foot, as in all rockers, should be turned round as far as possible, whereas in the inside back turn it was recommended not to turn it too far round, in order to avoid getting on to too hard an outside forward edge. But here the edge to be turned on to is the inside forward, and the further the foot is turned, the easier it will be to hold a light edge. Directly the turn is made the left shoulder, which has been brought round as far as possible (cf. photographs), should be brought back again into position for the inside forward edge, while the right shoulder, already leading before the turn, has but to advance a little more. This change of position is made by the shoulders only; the head is already far enough round for the forward edge.

Unlike the rest of the rockers, which are all more easily skated rather fast, this turn, which presents all the main difficulties of the inside back turn, is much better learned slowly.

All these turns, rockers and simple turns alike, should, when the skater begins to get familiar with them, be practised at an orange, and the turn made after its preliminary edge as near to the orange as possible, and always on the near side of the orange, short of it, that is to say, so that the orange is outside the curve of approach. The advantage of making turns at a particular spot is that the skater will learn in this way how long a time is necessary for the preparation for each, and at what distance from the orange he must begin to prepare, a piece of information which will be invaluable to him when he skates in combined figures, and has to make turns at the centre. He will find that the distance from the orange at which he must begin to prepare varies, of course, in relation to the pace at which he is travelling, but that it varies also for different turns, since in some there is far more preparation to be gone through than in others. In the outside back rocker, for instance, if he is travelling in a correct position on his outside back edge, a couple of yards is plenty even if he is moving fairly fast, whereas if he is moving at the same rate on an inside back edge, and is going to skate an inside back rocker, he will want at least three times that space in which to prepare, since here there is so much more to do before he is ready for the turn. It is therefore quite impossible to lay down any rule as to the distance or time required to make his preparation, since it varies according to the nature of the turn. But he should always remember that though the turn itself should be as brisk as possible, he should make his preparation with a certain deliberateness, since if he prepares too quickly, the operation is liable to become jerky, and a jerk will infallibly disturb his edge, unless his edges are so firm that he ought to know better than to do anything jerky. He should also remember that his preparation must be complete before the turn is made; he wants no effects of his rotation to be exerting their malign influence after the turn. But how much space is needed he will only learn in practice, and since he has to acquire this knowledge, he should, with a view to combined figures, practise his turns at a given spot as soon as he begins to get any mastery over them.

But as soon as he begins practising at an orange, he will find that to skate a forward turn on one foot and an inside back on the other, in order to start on the inside back edge, is a difficult movement to steer properly so that he may arrive at his point. He should therefore practise the following method of getting on to an inside back, which will also be of great use to him in combined skating. He wishes, let us say, to arrive at his orange after an inside back on the right foot.

Let him stand on the circumference of a big imaginary circle, on the circumference of which also, and at a distance of half the whole circumference, diametrically opposite to him, is the orange at which he wishes to make his turn. Let him get up a little speed, also along the circumference, and moving along the circumference, skate a "Once back," beginning on the right foot. As soon as he has taken up his back edge, and before he has got into the right position for it, let him cross his right foot behind the left, which is skating outside back, and put down an inside back edge on the right. The stroke is quite an easy one; it continues the curve set up by the forward turn and outside back of the "Once back," and will bring him smoothly and correctly up to his orange.

Finally, with regard to practice at a centre, the skater will find that two of these turns, namely, the two inside back turns, are much harder to place correctly than any of the others. The reason for this is that in the preparation for them he will have to turn his back on the centre and altogether lose sight of it, whereas in the forward turns it is in view until he is up to it, and in the outside back turn and outside back rocker, though he does not see it when he starts his edge, it comes easily and naturally into view some yards before he gets to it. It is, therefore, extremely important in the inside back turns that he strikes his inside back edge correctly, since he will have to steer blind for his orange when once his preparation has begun.

He is not meant, however, to devote his whole time to attaining accuracy at the centre with these eight turns, but just give a little practice to them, to begin to learn the hang of the thing, and then to pass on to the second group of turns in the next chapter.

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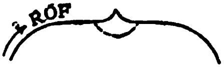
CHAPTER V

The four brackets—The four counters—The Mohawks and Choctaws.

THERE were found to be eight turns possible on each foot in which the body makes its revolution on the outside of its first curve. In four of these, the simple turns, the edge of the second curve after the turn was opposite to that of the first curve; in the other four, the rockers, the same edge was taken up after the turn as was employed before. Corresponding to these eight turns, there are eight more in which the body makes its revolution inside the curve instead of outside. In four of these the opposite edge is taken up after the turn, and these from their shape are known as brackets; in the other four the same edge is taken up after the turn, and these are known as counter-rockers (since their shape is approximately that of rockers) or more generally as counters. In them all the body is turned in the opposite or counter direction to that in which it is turned in the simple turns and the rockers. Exactly the same edges are employed in this second group of eight turns as in the first group, and it will be unnecessary to enumerate them again.

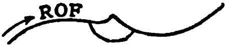
Brackets correspond to simple turns, and are, so to speak, simple turns turned inside out, and like the simple turns are of uniform shape, thus



(FIG. 5)

Like the simple turns they are skated from all four edges, and the dotted line shows the side of the curve (namely, the inside) on which the body revolves.

The counters similarly are approximately shaped like rockers, are skated from any edge forward or backwards on to the same edge in the opposite direction, and the body, as in the brackets, revolves on the inside of the first curve described.



(FIG. 6)

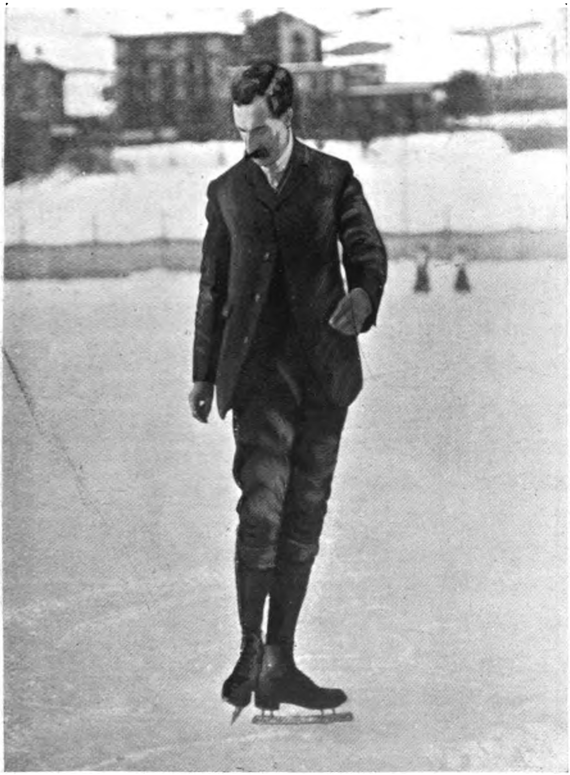
Outside Forward Bracket

The learner in beginning to acquire this second group of turns must put out of his head all that has been told him about the preparation for turns, and remember to practise only what has been said about edges. In skating a forward edge he must look in the direction he is travelling, let the shoulder of the employed foot lead, and travel on the back part of his skate. That will bring him to the point where he has to prepare for any of these eight turns of the counter-movement group, at which point, as has been said, he has to forget altogether what he has learned about turning, and begin all over again.

He is skating, let us say, on the outside edge of the left foot, and has been looking to the left. He has previously thought that as a turn is coming he must bring his right shoulder forward, so that his right arm crosses his body. But in brackets he must do exactly the opposite. Instead of revolving his body towards the right, he must revolve it towards the left, so that his right shoulder, and right side of the body, instead of coming forward, recede back as far as he can make them go, and instead of his right arm coming forward across his body, his left arm performs that useful manœuvre, being taken there by the left shoulder, which instead of receding has advanced as far as it can. And this contrary movement he must, as before, start with his head. His head must no longer look to the left but to the right, in the direction of the curve his left foot has already made. By this time there is no question that if the skater has followed these directions he will feel uncommonly queer. Let him then put down his other foot, which, as always, must be carried to heel, not turn at all or attempt to do so, but think about it instead.

Then let him start on the other foot, and skate outside forward on the right. He must go through the

Plate XII



OUTSIDE FORWARD BRACKET, JUST BEFORE TURN, LEFT FOOT

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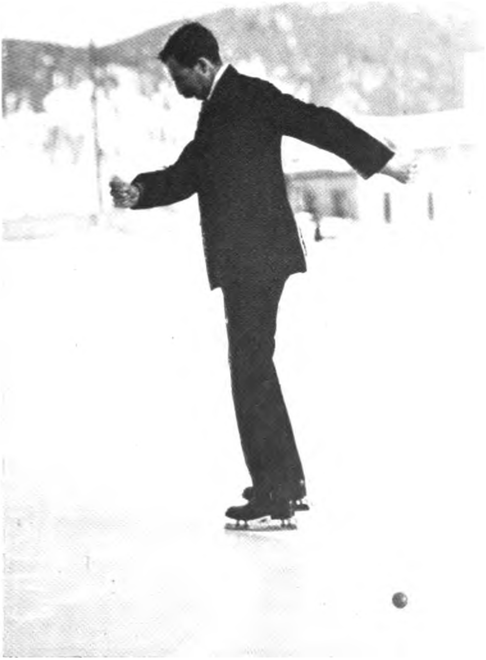
same perplexing manœuvres. Instead of looking in the direction of his turn, he must look back to the left to see where he has come from; instead of bringing forward his left shoulder he must bring it back till it is behind his direction of progress, while the right shoulder comes forward and the right arm hangs across his body. And let him practise this position on each foot until he feels moderately familiar with it, before attempting the turn at all. And let him look carefully at the photograph (No. XII) which illustrates what his position must be when he is skating on the left foot and is ready for the outside forward bracket.

As this preparation for the turn progresses, the tension on his ankle will increase, and he will feel irresistibly inclined to let the edge go on to the flat or beyond the flat on to the inside forward, and to avoid this he should make a conscious effort to get on to a stronger edge, turning the toe inwards (*i.e.*, towards the centre of the curve on which he is travelling). And when he feels he cannot resist this pressure, it is the moment for him to relieve it, not by getting on to the flat or on to the inside forward but on to the inside back, turning, as has been said before, on the inside of the direction of his curve instead of (as in the threes and rockers) on the outside of it. He must get his foot as far round as possible, as in the rocker, on the turn itself in order to secure a firm edge after it, and he must approach it far back on his skate, for the turn will throw him further forward on it than any turn he has yet attempted, since in brackets there is greater retardation than in any other class of turn.

Two photographs (XII and XIII) are given of this turn on the left foot, the one taken just before the turn, which will be found to illustrate the points mentioned above, the other (XIII) shows the position directly after the turn has been made. The head is still looking backwards towards the accomplished turn, but the shoulders in making the turn have been strongly reversed, with the result, inevitable in this turn, that the arms have flown out. They must be allowed to fall back again by their own weight: then the head must be turned again towards the right, in the direction of progress, the right shoulder will follow it, and the position regained will be that of the ordinary inside back.

The skater must be very careful in this turn to get the rotation of the body as complete as possible before the turn, for if there is unchecked rotation on the turn itself, while the foot is coming round, this belated piece of rotation will certainly throw him on to an outside back, instead of an inside back. As in the rocker, the wider the cusp of the turn (*i.e.*, the further the foot is brought round) the easier it is to hold the resulting edge, and to ensure this wider cusp the body must be brought as far round as possible before the turn.

PLATE XIII



OUTSIDE FORWARD BRACKET, JUST AFTER TURN, LEFT FOOT

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Inside Forward Bracket

The movement and adjustment necessary for the turn is analogous in every respect to that required in the outside forward bracket. The edge should be started, if on the right foot, with the head looking in the direction of progress and the right shoulder leading, and the skater should be well back on his skate. The head should start the preparation by looking back towards the right, and the right shoulder and right side of the body must be rotated to follow the changed direction of the head, while the left shoulder and side come forward till the left arm is swung quite across the body. This will be found a far easier position to assume than the corresponding movement on the outside edge: there is not, provided the skater is well back on his skate, nearly so much tendency to lose the edge and get on the flat. The turn again should be made as open as possible, and photograph XIV shows the skater the moment after the turn on a light outside back, still looking in the direction from which he has come. Next moment the head will begin to turn in the direction of the left shoulder, and the left shoulder, following the impulse thus set up, will be brought back towards the left till it is leading in the correct position for outside back on the right. It will be observed in this photograph that the skater is still on the back of his skate, though the turn must have tended to put him on the fore part.

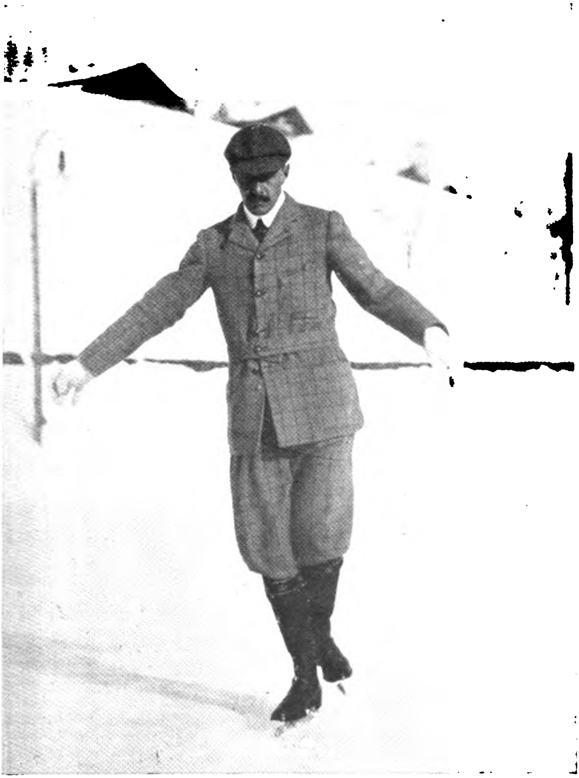
We will therefore give him the credit of having prepared for the turn while well on the heel.

In preparing for both these turns there is a strong impulse felt to put the unemployed foot forward and then back again in order to start this counter movement of the body, but this should be resisted from the first, since it sets up a habit which it is extremely hard to cure. The movement in both must be started by the head, and the unemployed foot be kept in place throughout. Like all counter turns they are much harder to skate fast than slow, and they should be practised slowly at first, the pace being gradually increased. As the turn approaches an effort should be made (as already stated) to accentuate the edge by turning the toe a little inward to counteract the tendency to get on the flat. The flat of the skate, of course, has to be passed over in the turn itself, since the back edge is the edge opposed to the one on which it was approached, but the correct edge should be maintained right up to the turn, and captured again immediately after.

Inside Back Bracket

This is a turn which many skaters find extremely hard to skate well, and all find it hard to skate it fast and yet make the cusp of the turn clean and unblurred. Very little preparation is needed for it, since the cor-

PLATE XIV



INSIDE FORWARD BRACKET, JUST AFTER TURN, RIGHT FOOT

[*To face p.* 106

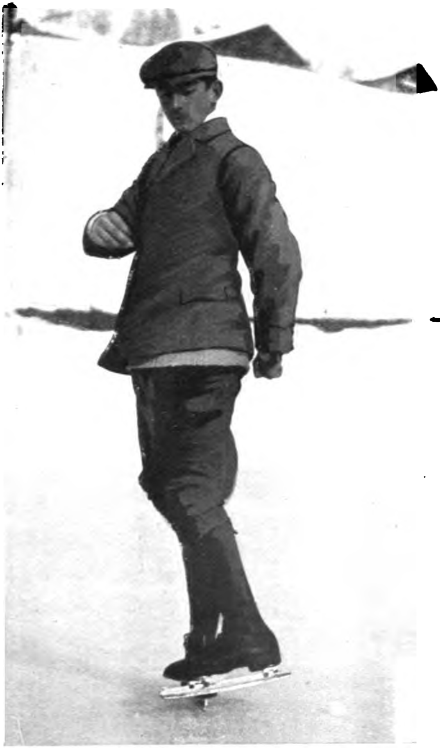
rect position of the body and shoulders on the inside back edge has only got to be slightly exaggerated before the preparation for the turn is complete, as will be seen in photograph XV, where the turn on the right foot is imminent. The head is already looking in the direction of the turn before any preparation is begun; then the left shoulder has to be pressed a little more back and the right shoulder brought a little more forward, and, provided again that the skater is travelling between the centre and heel of his skate, there is no further preparation necessary. If for a moment this photograph be compared with the one that shows the skater ready for the inside back turn, it will be seen at once how very much less the position is altered here from the ordinary carriage on the inside back than was necessary in the corresponding turn or rocker. Indeed I believe that the trouble most skaters have with it is due to the fact that they begin to prepare for it far too soon, and find a perfectly natural difficulty in holding the prepared edge, which necessarily is a very lightly balanced one, and one which is perilously near to a position on the flat. To hold the prepared position more than a yard or two is extremely difficult, and since to get from the correct inside-back position on to the prepared edge can be easily done in a couple of yards even while travelling fast, the preparation should not be made until the skater is close to the point where he means to turn. At the last moment before making the turn, he must consciously draw himself up and get his weight, if he can, nearly over the heel itself of his skate. Otherwise the turn will be dragged rather than flicked round and the sharpness of the cusp be replaced by a blunt blurred mark. Directly the turn is made the right shoulder (given he is skating on the right foot) should be instantly brought forward to assume the leading position for the outside forward edge. The foot should be turned round as far as possible, and the turn made on the heel. It is useful also just before the bracket to make an effort to turn in the heel of the travelling foot, in order to keep the edge firm, just as on the forward bracket the toe was turned in.

Outside Back Bracket

This and its corresponding counter are rightly considered to be the most difficult turns on the ice, but it is not really, in either case, the turn itself which is so difficult, as to get into the position from which the turn can be safely and cleanly made. The right position is difficult at first to understand, and always difficult to assume.

The skater may remember that when he began to get familiar with the outside forward rocker, but before he was on contemptuous terms with it, he had a tendency after getting on to his outside back edge (if skating on the right foot) to get a curious rotation on his body, so that instead of looking over his left

PLATE XV



INSIDE BACK BRACKET, JUST BEFORE TURN

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shoulder in the direction of his curve, with the left shoulder leading, he felt inclined to let his right shoulder lead and look over that. So let him now skate a rocker, and after making the turn omit to get his head and left shoulder round, but let this counter-rotation take them the opposite way, so that he is travelling on the outside back on his right foot, and looking over his right shoulder, in a position that has a kind of weird fascination about it, for it seems impossible to tell what is going to happen next. Then, if he can, let him steady himself in that position, and get on to the heel of his skate. That is the attitude he has to get into before doing back brackets, and he will then understand that it is possible to conceive turning from that edge (outside back on the right foot with the right shoulder leading) on the inside of his curve, as in all brackets, on to an inside forward edge. If at that moment his courage is hot within him, and he is on the heel of his skate, let him, to encourage himself, make a turn. It may land him on the inside forward edge or on the flat, or even on the outside forward edge or on the ice, but he will have felt the sort of thing which is required.

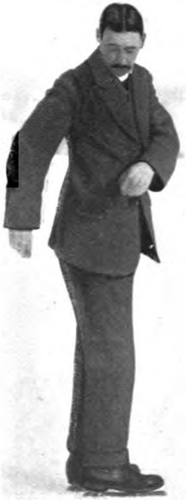
Then, having got some inkling as to what has to be done, let him (as once before) apologize to his rocker, and start to learn the turn properly.

He should for this purpose get on to an outside back on the right foot, travelling at fair speed. He need not be alarmed; he is not going to be asked to make the turn at all, but begin to get familiar with what the position for the turn is, and how it may be acquired.

He will at first be looking over his left shoulder in the direction of progress, and his left shoulder will be leading. He must then unwind himself, so to speak, and his head must begin the unwinding. From looking over the left shoulder it must start the counter-movement and turn towards the right. His left shoulder must follow it, turning to the right also, while the right shoulder must advance towards the right till it leads. This movement, an extremely difficult one, will quite certainly at first tend to throw the skater on the fore part of his skate, and he will instinctively throw his unemployed leg out and back (just as he did when learning the forward turn) to balance himself again. This tendency he should resist, and instead of yielding to it, should start again, otherwise he will find it has given great facility towards getting into the desired position, and he will be so pleased that he will make a habit of it. But he should start again, and try to remedy the tendency by keeping his head well back, as it begins to make the counter-rotation, and lean well back on his skate, making a "kink" in his right side similar to that which he was bidden to attempt in learning the inside back turn, and dropping his right shoulder a little as it gets into the leading position.

All this preparation, for it is a complete counter-

PLATE XVI



OUTSIDE BACK BRACKET, JUST BEFORE TURN

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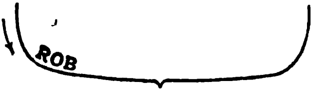
rotation of the body, will take him at first some yards of travel to accomplish, and it was for this reason that he was advised to start at a fair pace. He should then find himself in the attitude shown in photograph XVI, with his left arm thrown across his body, and his right shoulder leading, although he is travelling on the right outside back edge. Should he be so fortunate as to resemble this picture at all, he should deliberately hold that position which (unlike that of the inside back bracket) is not hard to hold when it is once acquired, and travel on it. When his pace slows down he may, if he is certain he is on his heel, attempt the turn on to inside forward.

It probably will not be a very good edge on to which he gets: as in the inside back turn, he is very liable to be put on to a hard forward edge, and the remedy for that is analogous to the remedy suggested by Mr. Lowther in the other case. There he was recommended not to turn his foot too far round in the turn; here the opposite holds, since this is a bracket, and he will mollify the hardness of his edge by turning his foot round as far as he possibly can.

This turn has two most insidious temptations connected with it. The counter-rotation of the body in the preparation for it has a great tendency to interfere with the edge, and put the skater on the flat. If he is base enough to remain on the flat, he will find that the rest of the rotation is easy enough, and that he can make the turn (also on to the flat) without much difficulty, and recover his inside forward edge afterwards. In that case his outside back bracket will be shaped like this.



(FIG. 7)

It is quite like a bracket, but it is not a bracket at all. It is a very pretty use of the flat of the skate, but there is no particular point in it. On the other hand, a neat backward sweep of the unemployed leg at the moment of beginning the counter-rotation will put him on to a beautiful hard outside back, and at the same time put him on to the back of his skate. But he is assured that there is a middle and correct method, in which neither the flat of the employed skate nor the weight of the unemployed leg is used, and he will attain it only by deliberate rejection of these heresies.

The turn is so difficult and the preparation so intricate, that a short recapitulation of the main points may be permitted.

(i) Start in the proper attitude for outside back, with the head looking in the direction of the curve, and the unemployed shoulder leading.

(ii) Begin the movement by turning the head away from the direction of the curve and back along the curve the skater has already traversed.

(iii) Let this counter-movement of the head set up a similar counter-movement of the shoulders. This will tend to put you on the fore part of your skate. Resist this temptation to lean forward by deliberately holding the head very upright.

(iv) Continue this counter-rotation till the head is looking towards the shoulder of the employed foot, which is now leading, and get a kink in your employed side.

(v) Hold this position till you cannot hold it any more. Then hold it a little longer.

(vi) Raise your toe so that you are quite on the heel, on the turn itself, and flick the foot round as far as you possibly can.

(vii) Remember that if your preparation is thorough there is no difficulty whatever about the turn itself. But never attempt the turn if you feel that it will be difficult.

(viii) Unless you give up all idea of making this turn properly, never assist yourself by a swing of the unemployed foot, or by getting on the flat of the skate before the turn.

COUNTERS

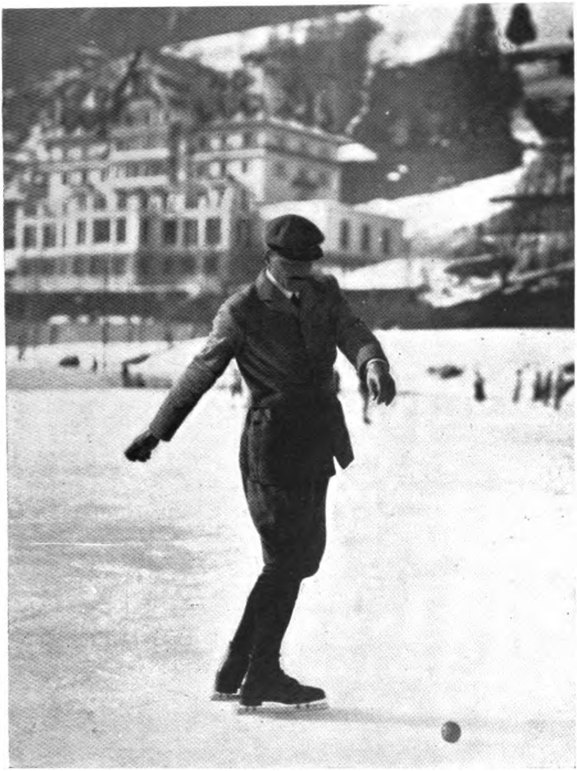
Counters are to brackets exactly what rockers are to simple turns. The rotation of the body takes place in the same direction as in brackets, but after the turn the edge is the same as before the turn. Outside forward counter puts the skater on to outside back edge, and so with all the remaining three, inside back counter, for instance, being skated from inside back edge to inside forward edge.

But in practice it will be found that the similarity between any one counter and its corresponding bracket is closer than between any rocker and its corresponding turn. There are terrors in store for the man who has learned his outside forward turn, and is proceeding to his outside forward rocker, whereas the man who has learned his outside forward bracket will find nothing very agitating in the outside forward counter. The reason for this difference is that whereas in rockers the turn is simple and the same nearly as the forward three, but the resulting edge is the difficult one to hold, in counters, where the turn is the difficulty, which has already been surmounted in learning the corresponding bracket, the resulting edge is quite easy to hold.

Outside Forward Counter

No photograph is given of this turn, since the corresponding bracket was fully illustrated, and in the pictures I secured of the counter I could find no difference at all between the preparation for the counter and that for the bracket. It has to be approached in exactly the same way as the bracket was approached, with the head initiating the counter-movement, and the counter-movement being taken up by the shoulders and the body till it is complete. The difference be-

PLATE XVII



INSIDE FORWARD COUNTER, JUST BEFORE TURN

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tween them comes in, I believe, on the turn itself, for though in both cases the foot has to be turned round as far as possible, on the counter the body must be a little thrown back, exactly as it was on the second edge of the forward rocker, while the head and shoulders at once assume the correct position for outside back. This little throw-back of the body will quite naturally and easily, provided the right preparation for a bracket has been gone through, put the skater on to his outside back edge. In skating this counter, however, very large and fast, the skater will find it expedient not to let his head and shoulders get into position immediately after the turn, but delay a little as in various other turns; otherwise he will be thrown on to too hard an edge.

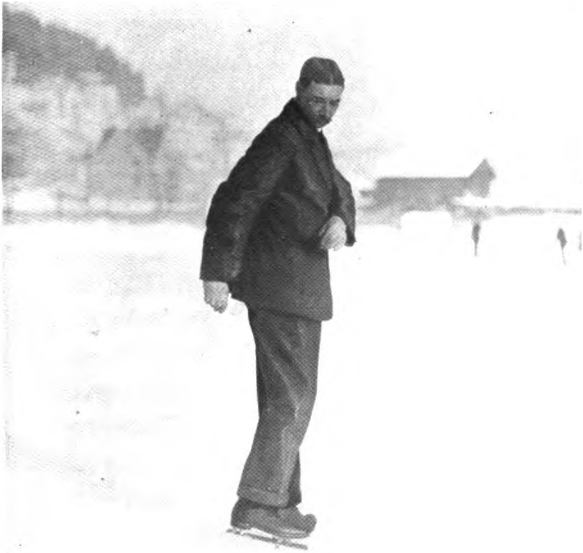
Inside Forward Counter

A photograph (No. XVII) is given of this turn, showing more or less the right position before the turn, which is an extremely easy one, though in order to execute it neatly the utmost possible counter-rotation must be given to the shoulders and body. It is easier than the corresponding bracket, for in the latter the resulting outside back edge has to be delicately handled for fear of getting on to the flat. But in the counter the resulting edge is perfectly easy to hold. In this illustration it will be observed that the skater is proceeding on his right foot and that the left shoulder is strongly leading, so that the turn which is imminent should be properly made. But apparently he has not taken the trouble to turn his head back as was recommended in the forward bracket, thinking, perhaps, that his turn was assured. He has let his left foot stray a little away from his right, which is a more serious fault; it should have been more definitely at heel. He is, however, fairly well back on his skate, which is important.

Inside Back Counter

This turn again is in its preparation almost identical with the inside back bracket, though perhaps in the counter the head, shoulders, and body (as in photograph XVIII) should be brought a little more round with the preparatory counter-movement than in the bracket. Like the bracket it requires very little preparation, and the failure to skate it well is due probably in most instances to the skater preparing too soon and getting himself into a strained and awkward position in trying to hold his prepared edge. He should get well back on his skate before the turn, and after it hold his shoulders for a yard or two in a similar position to that recommended after the outside back turn. In other words, his left shoulder (if he is skating as in the photograph on the left foot) should not come forward to take the lead immediately, but be brough into position gradually. Too strong a lead with it wil

Plate XVIII



INSIDE BACK COUNTER. JUST BEFORE TURN

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throw the skater on to a hard and curly edge. As in the bracket, the skater should have his heel well under him on the turn itself.

Outside Back Counter

All the terrific arrangements preparatory to the corresponding bracket must be gone through, and the counter-position held after it has been acquired. The temptation to get on to the flat of the skate before the turn seems somehow greater when the counter instead of the bracket is to follow, owing to the fact that the skater knows the maximum possible of turn has to be done, and that it makes it so very much easier to have a little piece of straight travel before it comes. He should remember that if he gets on to the flat the turn is valueless, since turns from the flat have no official status in skating. After the turn he will find a great tendency to get on to a hard edge (when he is so fortunate as to get on to an edge at all), but the remedy for this is simple. Let him as soon as he has made the turn not at once get into the correct position for outside forward, but try to hold his body for a yard or two *as if a forward bracket was coming*. Let him, in fact, try to set up a further counter-movement. This will infallibly bring him on to a light edge, and as soon as he feels that he has secured this he should at once drop into the correct attitude for outside forward. This counter-movement, I hasten to add, has nothing whatever to do with the counter-movement before the turn, which must be absolutely checked before the turn is made. It is a fresh counter-movement to be set up after the turn simply with the object of securing a light edge.

It will be remembered that in rockers a little piece of apparently false edge came in after the turn, though the edge was not really changed. Exactly the same thing is seen in all brackets and counters, though here, owing to the nature of the turn, the forced edge occurs just before the turn instead of just after. On the outside forward bracket, skated on the right foot, for instance, the skate by the counter-movement of the skater's body is forced to run for a few inches towards the left instead of towards the right, and, just as in rockers, it is mechanically impossible to avoid this. But it is a very different matter when the skater allows himself before the turn to get on to the flat; then, it is true, a piece of inside edge may creep in which will not be only "apparent" but actual. As long, however, as he does not get on to the flat before the turn, it is quite certain that the piece of forced edge is genuine outside edge, though it runs in so strange a direction.

MOHAWKS AND CHOCTAWS

There remain of the single movements in English skating only the Mohawks and Choctaws to be considered; for the prolific brood of Qs and reverse Qs, since they are combinations of edges and turns already learned, will find their proper place in the chapter on Eights which treats of the various combinations of turns. Loops, cross-cuts, counter-cross-cuts, beaks, etc., that large and interesting group of figures, are performed with the aid of the unemployed leg, and do not belong to English skating at all, any more than do those two-footed figures such as spread-eagles and grape-vines, which are skated with such marvellous facility and grace by the Continental school.

Mohawks and Choctaws, to attempt a definition, are a cross between edges and turns. A change of direction is effected by them, but the second half of the turn is in all cases skated by the second foot, the first, which has begun the movement, leaving the ice at the moment when the change of direction, from back to forward, or from forward to back, is made. In Mohawks the same edge (outside or inside) as has been laid down by the first foot is taken up by the second; in Choctaws the opposite edge. Thus, in a forward Mohawk the right foot starts on the outside forward, and the left is put down on the outside back, while in the corresponding Choctaw the left foot takes up the inside back.

Now it is at once apparent that back Mohawks and back Choctaws, *i.e.*, where the first foot starts on a back edge, will be nothing more than a back stroke with one foot and a forward or inside forward stroke with the other; and though it is extremely necessary to be able to do this, it ranks among the smaller sort of accomplishments. Nor in calling figures would such a manœuvre be called at all. Nobody—except the humorous—would even mention a back Mohawk; he would say instead, when the skater was on the back edge, "and forward" or "and inside forward," leaving out the word Mohawk or Choctaw as being unnecessary and possibly confusing. This, however, belongs rather to the section of combined skating, and it is merely intended to point out that though a back Mohawk, for instance, does exist, and consists of putting down a forward edge after travelling on a back edge, it is not known as a back Mohawk, nor indeed in skating parlance does such a turn exist. All Mohawks and Choctaws, then, for practical purposes, are forward Mohawks and Choctaws.

Forward Mohawk

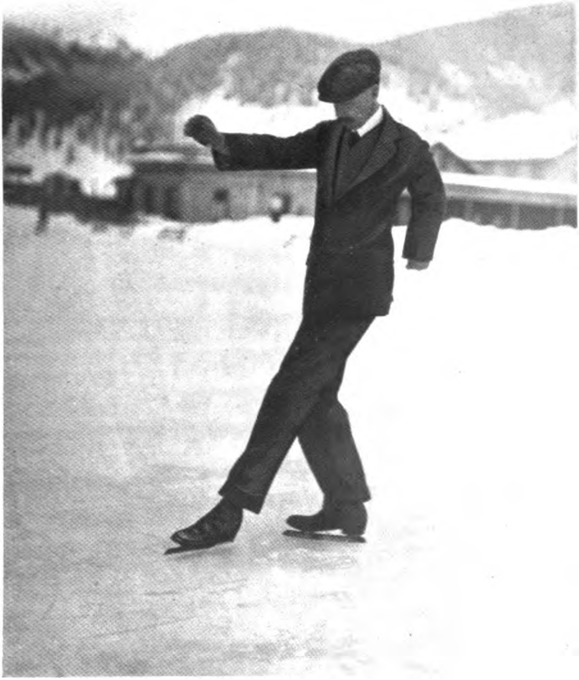
The skater here, from being on an outside forward edge, has somehow to get the outside back edge of the other foot on to the ice, not by interpolating a turn, but by putting it straight down backwards. To do this let him start, let us say, on the right foot, in the correct position for travelling, and proceed in every respect as if he were going to make a forward bracket up till the moment when the preparation is complete. He will then be looking back towards his left shoulder.

which is pressed as far as possible back, while his right shoulder is forward. His left foot should be carried to heel in the correct position.

Now when the preparation is complete, but not before, let him put his left foot down on the ice, behind his right foot on the back edge, with the toe close to the heel of the travelling foot, and the heel as near as possible to the travelling toe. At this moment the right foot will run out towards where the cusp of the bracket would be on the little section of forced edge, and as the left foot comes on to the ice the right foot must begin to leave the ice, the weight, as the left foot is put down, running up the blade from the heel where it has been balanced to the front part of the skate, which is the last to leave the ice. During this process, which, though it takes many words to describe, is just the taking of the foot off the ice, the left foot has to be completely put on the ice. It must grip the ice first with the *inside* of the blade near the toe, which gets the first purchase. Then the weight is brought back with the ordinary body swing until the skater is on the back part of the skate. During this time the right shoulder must come back into the proper position for outside back, and the skater pass instantaneously over the flat of his skate on to the outside back. It is only the first purchase of the foot which is accomplished with the inside of the blade; he does not travel more than six inches on the inside even while going at high speed.

The photograph (No. XIX) needs a word of explanation. It is taken at the moment of the Mohawk itself, and the weight, as is seen, is not yet on the back of the skate, while the foot in front is not more than an inch from the ice. But the foot in front, which at first sight looks like the left foot, is really the right foot, and the right leg passes behind the left which has just got on to the ice. The photograph indeed is a peculiarly interesting one, for by a happy chance it was taken at that infinitesimal part of a second which shows exactly what each foot has done. The right has just left the ice, and the toe is still pointed downwards, not yet having lost the position in which it gave the final thrust when it left the ice, while the skater has not yet with the left foot got on to the back of his skate, which is still gripping the ice with the inside edge near the toe. Nor has the head or the right shoulder begun to come round; they are both still in the forward bracket position which preceded the putting of the left foot on to the ice. Note also the great power with which the fresh stroke is being taken up; it is as if the skater, still in the middle of the backwards body swing, were recoiling in horror from what lay just in front of him. The same power is shown in the right arm, which momentarily has been thrown almost straight out by the shoulder-stroke, and also in the very deep bend of the left knee, which, as it straightens again at the end of the body swing, bringing the skater on to the back part

PLATE XIX



FORWARD MOHAWK, AT THE MOMENT OF TURN

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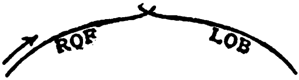
of the skate, will give tremendous velocity to the new stroke. Thrust from the foot that has just become the unemployed and body swing on to the foot that has just come on to the ice, are here splendidly shown.

Inside Forward Mohawk

The skater must here start on an inside forward edge, in the ordinary attitude, and after he has taken this up, begin to prepare for the inside forward Mohawk exactly in every detail as if he were going to skate an inside forward turn. Travelling, for the sake of variety, on the left foot, he must keep well on the back of his skate, bring his head round towards his right shoulder, advancing the left shoulder and pressing back the right and the right side of his body till he is absolutely ready to turn on to outside back. But at that moment, instead of making the turn, he must put down his right foot on the inside back edge of the blade near the toe, and at once, with the body swing, get on to the back part of his skate. During this quarter of a second the left foot has been leaving the ice, the fore part of the skate being the last to quit it, while the rotation of the body, which in brackets and the forward Mohawk ran the skate on to a little section of forced edge, will here only accentuate the already existing inside edge, since the pressure of the body turning runs on that line. Directly the right foot is on the ice the left shoulder must be brought back, and the head turned in its direction, the proper position for inside back edge on the right. Photograph XX shows the position after the right foot has taken up its edge and while the left has not yet had time to get to heel; this photograph, however, is a shade later than that of the forward Mohawk, the foot that has left the ice having come further off it.

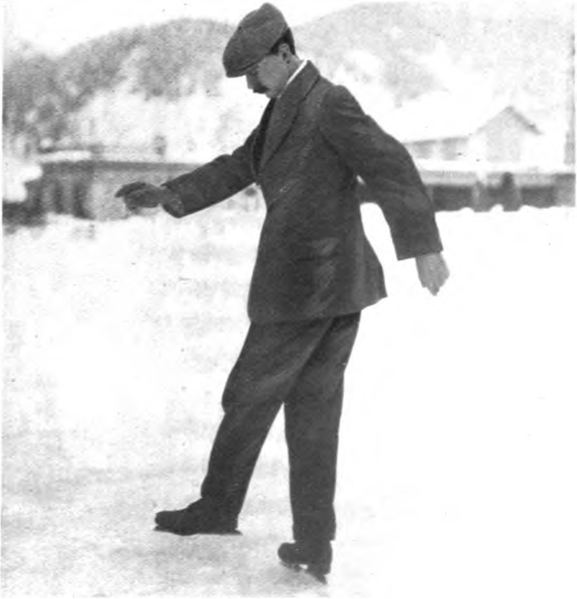
The strokes both in these Mohawks and in the Choctaws that follow are generally given in text-books as crossing one another, the diagram of the forward Mohawk being this:



(FIG. 8)

Many skaters, no doubt, do execute them in this way, and make very neat performances out of them; in these cases the foot to be put down is put down definitely across the line of the edge of the foot that is leaving the ice. But I think that there is a certain loss of power and pace in this method, for if the foot is put down behind the other, as seems certainly to have been done in the two illustrations given, there is clearly much more room for body swing, as the body has farther to swing back before it is balanced over the back of the skate again. Also the knee in taking the stroke can be more strongly bent. Indeed,

PLATE XX



INSIDE FORWARD MOHAWK, IMMEDIATELY AFTER TURN

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if the edges are made to cross, it can hardly be bent at all, and there is thus hardly any fresh power and velocity given. But skated without the crossing of the edge, a tremendously vigorous stroke and great gain of speed can be acquired from what in the other case is hardly more than merely dropping the foot on to the ice.

The learner will find himself much and illegally assisted if in skating the outside Mohawk he swings his unemployed foot in front of his travelling foot and from there swings it back to take up its edge. It is an ugly movement, and as it happens to be an improper one, he had better not permit himself this indulgence.

Outside Forward Choctaw

The preparation for this turn is identical with that of the outside forward Mohawk and its corresponding bracket. After the turn, however, the second foot has to take up the inside back edge, the edge with which it first grips the ice on the outside Mohawk. Here, however, the inside edge has to be maintained, and in consequence (if the right foot has started the Choctaw) the head and right shoulder have not to be brought round so far as if the Mohawk was being skated. This necessitates, if the edge is to be kept clean, a less vigorous body swing, with the result that less pace can be got out of this turn than out of the Mohawk, as there is not so much throw-back of the body possible. There is no temptation to get on to a hard inside back edge, and the head and shoulders can resume their proper position the moment the second foot gets on to the ice.

Inside Forward Choctaw

Starting on the inside forward edge, the preparation for the turn is, until the last moment, the same as the preparation for the inside forward Mohawk or inside forward three. But at the turn, since the second foot has to take its stroke on the outside back edge, it should be put down in the way described at length in the outside forward Mohawk. The same body swing will take the skater from the momentary inside back edge that is the foot's first attack on to the outside back and the back part of the skate. This should give the same additional pace that the stroke on the outside Mohawk gave.

Cross Mohawks and Choctaws

For the sake of the curious, it may just be stated what these are. A forward edge or an inside forward edge being in progress on one foot, the other is brought round in front of it so that the two toes are pointing to each other, and the back edge (usually with a playful little skip) is put on to the ice. They are very ugly and valueless, and are never used, for they imply the crossing of the feet in front. They can also be skated from back edges; in the inside back the second foot comes in front of the other, while the carriage of the body is that of semi-preparation for an inside back turn, while on the outside back the second foot is put down from a counter-position. They have been practically assigned to the acrobatic dust-bin, and may be left there.

CHAPTER VI

Eights—Qs—Reverse Qs.

NOW that the edges, changes, turns, Mohawks, and Choctaws have all been spoken of, there remain to consider (apart from Combined Skating) only the possible combinations of these, and their adaptation to the form of eights or modified eights, which in their simplest form, as has been mentioned, are complete circles of edges, outside or inside, skated on alternate feet, each of which starts from and again arrives at the centre. But into these edges can be worked turns or combinations of turns which are, so to speak, incidental to these simple complete circles, and occur either in the course of them or at the centre itself. Each circle of the eight goes on its way, starting from and arriving at the centre, and into its course are interpolated turns, brackets or Mohawks, or at the centre are placed rockers, counters, or Choctaws. Theoretically it is possible to skate any number of turns during the course of the circle; but three turns to each circle are the most that can be skated with any profit.

One Turn to a Centre

The simplest eight, after the edges have been mastered, is the forward turn to a centre, beginning on outside or inside edges. The line diagram (Fig. 9) shows the map of the figure if skated with ideal precision. The letters ROF, RIF, ROB, RIB in this and all diagrams denote right outside forward, right inside forward, right outside back, right inside back; while LOF, LIF, LOB, LIB, denote the same edges on the left foot. The arrows show the direction of curve.

Outside Forward Turn

The skater in all eights, and in every combined figure (unless otherwise directed) stands a little way back from his centre, and *takes up his edge close to the centre, with the centre on the inside of his curve.* That is to say, if he starts ROF, his centre lies on the right of his first edge; if on LOF, it lies on the left of his first edge. Similarly, if he starts RIF, his centre lies on the left of his first edge; if LIF, on the right of it. It is in this manner that he always leaves the centre at his start.

He must come in always short of his centre. Thus in the forward turn the RIB leaves the centre outside its curve, or to the left of it, the LIB leaves it outside the curve, or to the right of it. This rule holds good for every edge which terminates at the centre. To repeat it once more—nobody understands it at once (at twice he may)—the centre is inside (included in) the edge that leaves it, outside (excluded from) the edge that comes back to it.

The skater then stands at the approximate position of the little cross on the dotted axis line in the diagram, takes a stroke with his left foot that will place his right foot in position to begin its outside forward edge just short of the centre. The ROF must be held in the proper position for travelling on that edge until the skater begins to prepare for his turn in time to place the turn half-way round the circumference of his proposed circle, thus leaving an equal distance to be travelled on the RIB. He must not begin to prepare for the turn at once on leaving the centre, else he will swing the turn, never getting on to a proper ROF at all, or make the turn too soon, which at first he will certainly do.

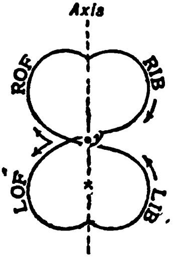

FIG. 9

Having arrived at his turn, he must at once shape his edge back to the centre again, and not let it stray further out, as would be quite proper if he was skating a fast big turn, but is quite improper now. He must after the turn go no further from his centre than he has already gone, and at once see about getting home again, taking up the proper position for RIB at once, and looking towards his centre. As he approaches it he must consciously exaggerate the travelling position of R I B, because he has at once to start on an edge of L O F. He must get his left shoulder well back and his head far round to the left, else he will not be able to put himself at once on the travelling position of L O F which immediately follows.

This strike is far the most difficult point in the figure, for the R I B must be brought up to the centre with the body far round, while the L O F must be started on as spread-eagled a position as possible: it must be struck, that is to say, as far to the *left* as it conveniently can, so as to take up a curve that will be symmetrical with the R I B that has approached the centre. And the conduct of the body during the R I B is the master of the situation. It must be turned, as it approaches the centre, as far round towards the left as it can go. This makes the L O F strike easy. But if there is any tendency to rotation after the R O F turn, it will bring the skater into his centre with a desire to look over his right shoulder, and this will make the forward stroke not only difficult but impossible. *The correct position for* R I B *with the head looking towards the left shoulder should be emphasized as the centre is approached,* so that the head nearly looks over the left shoulder.

The turn on the left foot should take place when the skater is half-way round his circle. He will certainly want to make it before he is in that desirable position. Let him therefore make up his mind to do it after; he will not at first succeed, but the desire to do it after the middle point of his circle will tend to make him do it in about the right place. The two turns should thus look towards each other, and the axis line between them should pass through the centre.

Inside Forward Turn to a Centre

The shape of this eight should be exactly the same as that of the O F eight, but the learner will find it much harder to hold the R I F edge long enough. He will also find it more difficult to bring his R O B back to the centre, and will tend to stray away into the country. But the turn should be made at the furthest point away from the centre that he reaches. The R I F takes him away from the centre till the turn is made; the R O B at once diminishes his distance again. He must not, however, as he is liable to do when he has conquered his inclination to stray out into the country, get by reaction on to a hard curly edge that will bring him in short of his centre. His proper course lies between these two errors, and he will avoid the first (that of straying into the country) by assuming correct O B position as soon as he has made the turn, and he will avoid the second by not straining to look over the shoulder of the unemployed to catch sight of his centre. If he does that he will get a hard curly edge, but if he waits till it comes naturally in sight (which will be when he is about three-quarters of the way round his circle), he will come in comfortably enough.

But the moment his centre appears over his shoulder (the left shoulder, if he is skating on the right foot, the right if he is skating on the left) he has to begin a fresh manœuvre. *He must emphasize the position of the* ROB *exactly as if he were going to do a* ROB *rocker.* He must at once get his head, shoulder, and left side of his body more round than is required by the position of ROB in order to make his next strike, which will be LIF, easy. And that strike he must make in as spread-eagled a position as possible (just as in the outside forward three), so that his next curve, away from the centre, may be symmetrical to the curve which has just approached it. And, again, he must reserve the next turn and try to place it beyond the half-way house of his circle.

In the second class of the National Skating Association the candidate is required to skate one, two, and three simple turns to a centre, so it will be well to consider these before passing on to other turns to a centre. These figures, the two and three turns to a centre, are the worst possible practice if the skater allows himself to skate them improperly, but, on the other hand, they are excellent discipline for his edges if he tries to perform them in accordance with really good form. It is not easy to skate them properly.

Forward Two Turns

The tendency here is to start from the centre with rotation set up at once. The skater knows that he has to make two turns, one of which is the inside back turn, before he gets back to his centre again, and thus is inclined to begin rotating instantly, and not to cease rotating till he arrives there. If skated like this, the figure is quite useless. There are three edges in it and two turns. The proper travelling position should be assumed on all those edges, and the preparation for these turns made after the correct attitude has been taken up. One whirling rotation that happens to perform the specified regulation is no use whatever as practice. If the skater wishes to profit by learning this eight, and there is great profit to be got from it, he must skate it in correct method, and his circle should be of a diameter of at least fifteen feet. Later on he will get it much larger than this, but he should not care about skating it smaller.

He should start from his centre in the correct position for the R O F, and not get into prepared position for the turn till he is approaching it. Since his whole circle is to be of fifteen feet diameter, and it consists of three edges connected by two turns, he should try to get these three edges of about equal lengths. In this case they will each be about fifteen feet long, as the circumference of a circle is three times its diameter. He should, therefore, not begin to prepare for his first turn (which should be one-third of the way round the circle) until he has travelled quite twelve feet out from his centre.

This turn will put him on to RIB, and it is the correct treatment of this edge that largely makes for the success of the whole figure. Most skaters are apt to let it stray away from the centre, whereas, properly, the skater has already nearly arrived at his furthest distance from the centre when he makes his first turn. This edge, therefore, should not be a very light one, but should take a decided curve. Otherwise, the whole circle will be a pear-shaped affair at best, and the skater will have great difficulty in getting back to his centre at all. The diagram (Fig. 10) gives, in line, the right shape for the circle (and also the shape which makes it most easy to skate); the dotted line the course the beginner is apt to shape.

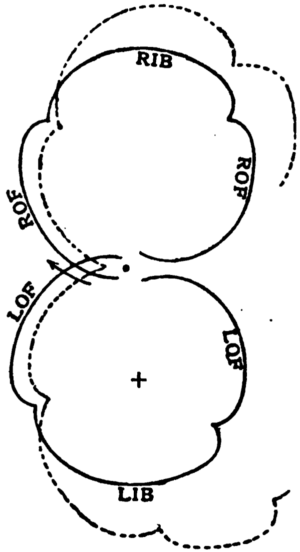

FIG. 10

The second edge, like the first, should be started in correct form for the RIB, that is to say, the head should be looking towards the left, and the left shoulder should be leading. Then as the second turn approaches he should make his preparation for the IB turn, beginning it, in this case, since he has more to do, earlier than he began in the case of the OF turn. Having made it he should bring the ensuing curve right up to the centre, and make his strike exactly as in the eight on the simple outside forward edge. The right place to make the second turn is two-thirds of the way round the circle. The skater will then be diminishing every moment his distance from the centre, and provided his turn is clean, should have no difficulty in getting back to it. But if he is not, when he makes it, coming back to his centre, but still, as in the dotted line, going away from it, he will find it almost impossible to get back at all. Hence the importance of shaping the second edge rightly. And while on this second edge the skater should have a good look at the centre, in order to enable him to judge when he should begin to make his preparation for the second turn, since the preparation for the second turn will make it impossible for him to see it.

Inside Two Turns to a Centre

The turns should be placed and the edges shaped in exactly the same manner as in the outside two turns, that is to say, the edges should all be of approximately equal length, and the turns placed one-third and two-thirds of the way round the circle. Here again, too, the shaping of the second edge is a crucial point in the figure, and as in the corresponding one, it should not be allowed to stray away far from its centre; but the skater should at once, after the first turn, put himself into position for the R O B edge, and hold this edge strongly. Each edge, as in the forward two turns, should be taken up in the correct position as if no turn was coming, and the preparation for each turn should not be begun until the skater is within a few feet of the place where he means to lay his turns down.

The second turn is easier to judge and easier to skate than the second turn in the forward two turns. Here the skater will be approaching it on R O B, so that the centre should be visible when he begins to make his preparation, while the preparation itself, instead of taking it out of his field of vision, brings it more directly in front of him. After making the second turn, he will do well not to bring himself into proper position on the R I F at once, but for a yard or so keep his left shoulder forward before letting the right lead again. He will find that by doing this he will counteract a tendency to get on to a hard R I F edge, and bring his curve more satisfactorily up to the centre. Otherwise he will tend to come in short of it and take a straddle rather than a stroke with his left foot.

This eight is much easier than the forward two turns, and the skater will soon find that he can improve on the fifteen feet diameter.

Forward Three Turns

The turns in this eight should be laid down at distances of one quarter, one half and three-quarters of the way round the circle, and thus again the skater will keep his edges of equal length. Since the second turn from the RIB is put down opposite his centre, it is at this point that he will be furthest away from it. He must, however, guard against letting his RIB stray away, but should keep a strong curve following the line of his circle. Since he has to turn three times in making his circle he will find it impossible to maintain the correct travelling position on any of the edges for long, as the turns follow each other so quickly. He should, however, always get in the right position for a moment or two, so as to check his rotation completely, which, if he allows it to be unbroken, will turn his eight into a mere teetotum swing. He will find for certain that he has very little pace left when he comes to his third turn, and here, to help himself, he should allow himself to get rather forward on his skate just before the turn, so that he gets a little body swing when, after the turn, he rocks back on to the hinder part of his skate again. This must not approach a kick or a jerk, but be a very gentle swing back of the body on to the back of the skate again. If he can do without it, so much the better; but if he finds that after much patient practice he is still unable to bring this last edge up to the centre, he will find that skating this last turn rather forward on his skate, and then pulling himself back on to the hind part again, will give him a little extra pace.

This eight, though if wrongly practised it tends to encourage swung turns, is admirable in teaching control if the learner will refuse to swing his turns but skate each in correct form. It will teach him also to skate the turns absolutely clean, since he will find at once that anything like a scrape so impedes and checks him that his chance of getting round entirely vanishes. He should therefore prepare very fully for each turn.

The last edge will be RIB, and on approaching the centre on this he must put into practice what was told him on approaching the centre after one forward turn. He must emphasize the correct position on the edge, get his left shoulder far back and his head much round (as if indeed he was beginning to prepare for an IB counter), and strike on to his LOF in an almost spread-eagled position.

Inside Forward Three Turns

This is to be set about in the same way as the forward three turns; the turns are to be in the same places and the edges of approximately equal length. Here the skater will find that if he approaches his second turn (ROB to RIF) with slightly exaggerated preparation, *i.e.*, with the head and left shoulder leading very strongly, and gets a little further back than usual on his skate, he will get (provided he makes the turn smartly) a certain addition of pace out of the turn itself, which is an invaluable accomplishment. He may also, with this same view of getting pace, should he still require it, approach the third turn (RIF to ROB) a little forward on his skate, and *while the turn is being made*, rock back again. This will give him a little body swing.

He must approach the centre finally in the attitude of the inside-forward-turn eight, getting very much round, and striking very much outwards, so that his last edge on ROB and the first on LIF approach and leave the centre in uniform directions.

Other One-turn Forward Eights

Rockers, counters, brackets, Mohawks and Choctaws can all be skated into eights, the turns in the case of rockers, counters, and Choctaws being skated at the centre, while in brackets and Mohawks they are skated half-way round the circumference as in the case of the simple turns. For the sake of uniformity we will take this latter class first.

Bracket Eight

This eight is started on the ROF edge, and should be begun in the correct travelling position as if no bracket was coming. Now here in preparation the correct travelling attitude for the forward edge has to be got rid of and counter-rotation be set up, and then checked. There is more adjustment to be made before the body is in correct position for the bracket, and the preparation for it therefore should be begun earlier in the circle than was necessary in the forward turn, and the learner, if attempting a bracket eight of fifteen feet diameter, should begin to prepare when he has gone not more than a quarter of the way round the circle. The ordinary preparation for a bracket should be gone through, and, as will be remembered, the skater's head the moment before the turn should be looking backwards towards his left. And there it must remain, so that as soon as the turn is made it will be looking along its coming curve towards the centre. The left shoulder should not after the turn be brought too far back, for the edge to be skated is not a long light one, but one with a firm strong curve leading to the centre. Just as the centre is approached, however, the left shoulder should be pressed back, while the head turns more strongly to the left in order, as in the case of the forward turn eight, to give facility of striking to the left foot.

The eight is not easy: there is always a tendency to get on the flat of the skate before the bracket, and it is extremely important not to do so, since this entirely spoils the shape of the eight. The edge, therefore, of

R O F should, as the turn is approached, be emphasized by turning the toe a little inwards, *i.e.*, to the right. This will make the edge harder, and so counteract the tendency to lose it. The cusp of the turn should be very open, and no one should attempt to get any speed out of the turn, since that will lead to false (O B) edge after it.

Inside Forward Bracket

This is far easier than the outside bracket. The turn should be half-way round, and the foot on the turn be brought to include as wide an angle as possible. The skater should, after the turn, on no account try to see the centre over his left shoulder before it comes naturally into sight, but wait for its appearing in the correct R O B attitude. When it does appear he should begin to emphasize his travelling attitude, and get his left shoulder far back in order to make an easy strike with his left foot. In this eight, also, the preparation for the turn should be begun early, for it is better and easier to hold the prepared edge than to be obliged to hurry the preparation.

Mohawk Eight

This is a very pretty and not difficult eight, which brings in both forward and inside forward Mohawks. The skater, starting on the R O F, should skate as if he were going to do a forward bracket half-way round his circle, but having arrived there he puts down instead a LOB in Mohawk position which takes him back to his centre again. But the whole preparation is precisely that proper for a bracket, which is also proper for a forward Mohawk.

His arrival at the centre and his leaving it is identical with the proper manner to arrive and leave in an IF turn eight; his right foot strikes on to the RIF, and he prepares as if for an inside forward turn. But having arrived at the half-way house, he puts down instead a LIB, making an inside forward Mohawk, for again the preparation for these two is identical, and arrives at his centre in the position of LIB to strike on to ROF, as he did in skating the outside forward turn to a centre.

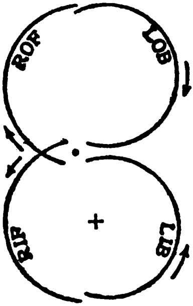

FIG. 11

As this eight produces no alternation of feet, the skater should give equal practice to his left foot in preparing for Mohawks (and his right in taking them up) by starting also on his left foot.

Forward Rocker Eights

The eight here must be started on the circumference of its proposed circle and half-way round it. The skater, with a preliminary stroke, strikes off on to ROF and executes a rocker on the near side of the centre, *i.e.*, short of it (since he is approaching it), which takes him out over half his second circle. When he arrives at this point, half-way round his second circle, he strikes on to an OF edge with his left foot, turns his rocker at the centre (again on the near side) and is carried out on the LOB to the point at which he started his ROF, and must now start another. Each foot, in fact, in turn does the second half of one circle and the first half of the other.

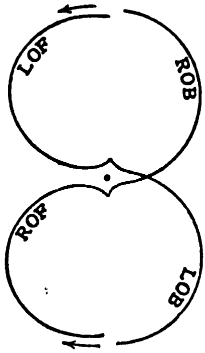

FIG. 12

This eight is extremely pretty, but it requires a good deal of practice to get it satisfactory. The rocker must be made very open, *i.e.*, the foot must go round very far, or the second edge, if held at all, becomes what is known as a "fighting edge." The skate will be forced on to its edge, with the effect that the edge will be too straight, and the outside of the skate will all the time be throwing up little shavings of ice. This is only to be counteracted by getting the foot very much round at the turn, which will make a bold curving edge instead of a fractional and fighting one. It is very hard to describe this fighting edge: the skater, however, first attempting this rocker eight will be at once familiar with it.

As he gets near the end of his ROB, the skater must get his body and head as far as possible round to the left, and put down his left foot also as far round to the left as possible, since he has to get back to his centre on his L O F, and there make his rocker. He will find it much easier to put his rocker on the far side of the centre at first, since that gives him a wider space in which to get round; but as soon, anyhow, as he has got the "hang" of the eight, he should approach his centre correctly.

Apart from the accurate placing of his rockers, he will find his great difficulty is the strike of the fresh foot in such a direction that it will come into the centre. His R O B, therefore, should be well skated out, and if anything held till it has passed the middle point of the circle, and has just begun to lessen the distance between it and the centre again. If it is still moving away from the centre, it is impossible (or nearly so) to put down the left foot in the right direction; the R O B, therefore, must be held at least till it has reached the furthest point away from the centre. The circles should not be less than twenty feet in diameter before the skater can consider them properly mastered.

Inside Forward Rocker Eight

The diagram of this figure is identical with that of the rocker eight, but it is here started on R I F, which rocks to R I B, and on the second foot starts on L I F, which rocks to L I B. It is a far easier eight to skate, since the strike on to L I F from R I B is an easier one both to take up and to steer to the centre than the corresponding outside strokes, and the I B edge is not so prone to fight. But fight it will unless the foot comes very completely round on the turn.

Outside Forward Counter

This eight is analogous to the rocker eight, but a counter is skated at the centre. It should be approached in the usual counter position, and the edge should be emphasized before the turn by an attempt, anyhow, to turn the toe a little in. The succeeding edge is far easier than the corresponding rocked edge, but the same difficulty occurs with the strike of the second foot, so that here also the R O B should be brought a shade past the half-way house, and be beginning to direct itself towards the centre again. Rather longer space should be allowed for preparation before the counter than was necessary in the rocker, just as the bracket required more preparation than the turn.

Inside Counter Eight

This is much the easiest of the group, both in turn and strike. It is wise to get the head looking towards the left shoulder (if skating R I F) before the turn, so that no readjustment of it is necessary afterwards. This eight can be skated on a larger scale than any of the others.

Choctaw Eight

The Choctaws are skated at the centre, and, the ROF leading, the LIB takes up the second stroke. The RIF then brings the inside Choctaw to the centre, and this is taken up by the LOB, which brings the completed figure to the place where it was started. The preparation on the first ROF is, of course, bracket preparation, and this first edge should be skated with some vigour, since it is impossible to get much pace out of the Choctaw. On the inside Choctaw, however, as has been seen, the pace should increase with the putting down of the second foot, but the preparation for the turn (that of IF turn) should be very complete, and the skater should be with his back completely turned to the centre when he puts his second foot down. These figures do not change the feet, and, like the Mohawk eights, should be begun on the left foot as well as the right.

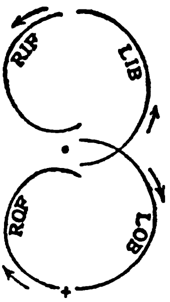

Fig. 13

This completes the list of possible forward eights with one turn in them, and we may proceed to those which contain two turns or a turn in combination with a Mohawk or Choctaw. Many of these must pass with scarcely more than mere statement, since they are but combined applications of what has been already said; others deserve a somewhat fuller treatment. Forward two turns and inside forward two turns have already been discussed; combinations of turns and brackets and combinations of brackets and turns are next in order.

Forward Turn Bracket

The turn and the bracket, in this case the forward turn and the inside back bracket, should be laid down at the points where the turns in the forward two turns were placed. But whereas in the forward two turns the correct attitude on the inside back edge had to be soon interrupted in order to prepare for the I B turn that would follow, here the contrary movement has to take place, and the correct position for the I B edge, so far from being abandoned in preparation for the turn, has to be held, and then emphasized, since the I B bracket is skated off an emphasized I B position.

The first turn, as in the diagram, must be placed as before, about a third of the way round the circumference. When this turn is made, the correct attitude for R I B must be instantly taken up and held till the preparation for the I B bracket begins; it should then be emphasized. Instead of, as in the forward two turns, the correct position being changed, till the head looks over the shoulder of the right foot, the correct position has to be accentuated till the head looks along the left shoulder. This implies a complete cessation of the natural rotation, and a setting-up of the counter rotation. It becomes therefore very important that the ordinary rotation should be quite checked before the first turn, else on the RIB both the rotation will have to be checked, and the counter-rotation established.

This establishment of the counter-rotation necessary for the bracket is the only difficulty in the figure, and the skater will find that the unemployed foot has at first an overmastering tendency to swing out behind on the RIB edge in order to start the skater on his counter-rotation, and put him a little further back on his skate. This should be avoided, and the change in position made by turning the head strongly to the left as soon as the RIB is taken up, and by pressing back the left shoulder. In practice the RIB should be unduly lengthened, so as to give time for the counter-rotation to take effect. Then, as soon as the "feel" of the preparation for the bracket is experienced, the second edge, RIB, should be put within its proper limits. As soon as the IB bracket is turned,

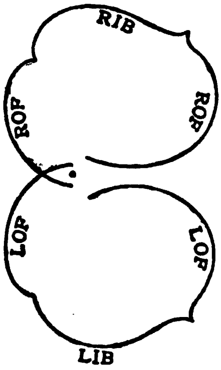

FIG. 14

there is no further difficulty; the edge to the centre is easy. What is difficult is to manage the IB edge. This can only be done by getting into the correct position for it immediately, and afterwards emphasizing it.

Inside Forward Turn Bracket

This is the most difficult of all the forward two-turn combinations, and the very elect are shy of it. It may well be left by the learner until he has got the feel of all other two-turn horrors, and is only put in at this early stage of two-turns since it corresponds with the easiest of all two-turn combinations, namely, the outside forward turn bracket.

The worst of this disgusting combination is that there is no possible "tip" which will make it easy; it is its nature to be difficult. And its difficulty lies not only in the back bracket itself but, as in almost every two turn eight, in the management of the second edge.

The skater must start on his RIF and make his turn as in the inside forward two-turn eight, and then the difficulties begin. The whole of the natural tendency is to let his left shoulder fall back into the proper leading position for the ROB, but this is what he must not do. As soon as his RIF turn is made, he should just turn his head to the left for a moment, but only in order to start it with a little run, so to speak, on the counter-rotation for the coming bracket, for which it has to give the lead to the shoulders and body. The skater then having just turned his head to the left should, without pause, bring it round again, till it looks, though he is on the R O B edge, inwards towards the centre. This will (or should) start the counter-rotation of the shoulders, which must be continued till, while maintaining his R O B edge, the right shoulder is leading and the left arm hangs across the body. This counter-rotation directly after the I F turn is very difficult to set up, and the backward swing of the unemployed leg, which would so simplify it, must be avoided. But since it has to be accomplished in that third part of the circle allotted to the R O B edge, the skater has literally not time to assume the correct position on the R O B and then unwind himself again. The head should be turned for a moment as if beginning to assume the correct position, but this is only to start it on its counter-movement. It is absolutely essential to get well on the heel on the R O B edge.

The bracket should be placed in the proper position for a second turn (two-thirds of the way round the circle), and as soon as it is made the head should be turned rather strongly to the right instead of at once looking to the centre. This will help to keep the edge light, and prevent it curling in. As soon as a light edge has been established the head should look to the centre again.

Forward Bracket Turn

This is a good second in the matter of difficulty to the last eight described for reasons analogous to those which made the other so difficult. Here it is rotation that has to be set up on the RIB after the tendency to counter-rotation in the ROF bracket has been checked, and this rotation has to be carried to its fullest possible extent before the turn to ROF can be managed.

The skater starting on the ROF should place his bracket not more than a third of the way round the circle, and here again he has not time to assume the correct travelling position on his RIB, but must be content with getting about half-way into the ordinary travelling position of RIB. Then starting with his head, which must begin to look towards the right shoulder again, he must press his right shoulder back, simultaneously bringing the left forward, getting gradually ready for the IB turn until he can see the heel on which he is travelling, and also, over his right shoulder, can see his centre again. That is the right moment for the turn. He must in making his ROF bracket carefully avoid getting on to the fore part of his skate, since he will have to get right back again before he can make the following turn.

Inside Forward Bracket Turn

A far easier combination. Directly after the inside bracket he should get into correct position for R O B, and gradually emphasize this till he is ready for the turn on to R I F. He should prepare very completely for this turn, so as to get a little speed out of it.

Forward two Brackets

This is a figure presenting little if any more difficulty than the forward bracket to the centre, since after the first bracket, which should be skated one-third of the way round the circle, the skater will find himself in an I B position, from which he will easily pass by a little emphasis of it into the position for an I B bracket. Unlike the R O F bracket turn, there will be no need to check rotation and assume counter-rotation; the counter-rotation of the first bracket will of itself place him in position for the second.

Inside Forward two Brackets

This is much more difficult, since it includes the difficult O B bracket. It is, however, easier than the I F turn bracket since there is no rotation to be checked and counter-rotation to be established. As soon as the skater has turned his I F bracket he should begin to prepare at once for the O B bracket, doing no more than turn his head momentarily towards his left shoulder with a view to starting it on its counter movement.

Other combinations which need not be spoken of at length are:

Forward Mohawk turn to the centre, and inside forward Mohawk turn to the centre.

Forward Mohawk bracket to the centre, and inside forward Mohawk bracket to the centre.

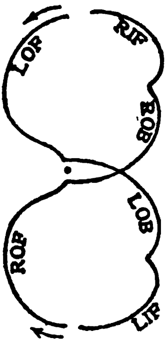

Fig. 15

Forward rock at the centre, turn, and forward rock at the centre, turn (see Fig. 15).

Inside forward rock at the centre, turn, and inside forward rock at the centre, turn.

Forward rock at the centre, bracket, and forward rock at the centre, bracket.

Inside forward rock at the centre, bracket, and inside forward rock at the centre, bracket.

Before passing on to the eights started on back edges, which, as a whole, are far more difficult than those starting on the forward edges, it will be well to mention a class of single turn figures which come intermediary between these two groups, and in which the first circle is skated on the forward edge and the other on the back edge. St. Moritz, I believe, was the first club to introduce them into competitions in the English style, though they have long been used in Continental skating. Since a different turn is skated on the second foot from that skated by the foot that begins, they should be begun on each foot in turn.

Forward Turn and Inside Back Turn

The skater begins R O F, skates his turn opposite the centre, and comes back to it on R I B. He then takes up L I B at his centre, lays down his turn opposite the centre, and arrives at it again on L O F.

It is impossible to devise a finer test for the skating of the inside back turn than this. The I B stroke has to be taken off an inside back stroke (see directions on the skating of the I B eight), and the correct travelling position for the I B edge should be held till the skater is about a third of the way round his circle. Preparation must then be made for the turn, and it should be accurately placed in a line with the centre and the forward turn, and the turn once made, the skater should at once be moving nearer his centre again. He will find it very difficult at first (and never easy) to hold the L I B edge long enough, but will tend always to make the turn too soon, and to get further away from his centre after it. He will also (which is extremely good for him) have to start his L I B at a good pace else he will never get round his circle. The two circles, if he wants to skate the figure really well, should be of about the same size. The necessity of holding back his turn till half-way round will give him excellent practice in setting up the necessary rotation for it after he has assumed his correct travelling position on L I B, for if he starts his edge from the centre with rotation he will not be able to hold it till he is half-way round. The R I B on which he approaches the centre in the first circle should be continued till he is some six inches past the centre, in order that he may not, when striking on to the fresh edge, disturb his centre with the right foot which has just left the ice.

Inside Forward Turn and Back Turn

This is a far easier figure. Starting on the right foot, the R O B after the turn should be held well up to the centre, and the L O B held till half-way round the second circle. Here the correct position for the turn is only an emphasization of the correct position for the O B edge, and not, as in the last eight, a reversal of it.

Forward Bracket and Inside Back Bracket

The difficulty here is the strike from inside back to inside back at the centre. When the L I B has been taken up the travelling attitude should be held to within a few feet of the proper place for the I B bracket, since all the preparation to be made is an emphasization and not a reversal of position.

Inside Forward Bracket and Back Bracket

A far more difficult eight. The strike at the centre from ROB to LOB is easy enough and should be taken rather strongly, and correct travelling attitude at once assumed on the LOB. But here the counter attitude has to be taken up before the back bracket, and this requires even more preparation than is necessary for the IB turn. The turn therefore should be prepared for as soon as about a quarter of the circle has been skated, and, as before, the preparation should begin with the head, which, instead of looking over the right shoulder, must turn to the left till it looks over the left shoulder. But the skater is advised to start his LOB in correct travelling position; he has a half circle of it, not as in the case of IF turn bracket only a third.

The eights corresponding to the rocker and counter eights also make very pretty figures if skated forwards on one foot and backwards on the other. Here it is usual and advisable to start them at a fixed point, and bring them back on the *off* side of that fixed point, *i.e.*, beyond it, in order that the skater may start again on the same lines as his first eight, which he could not do if he brought his returning edge to the near side of this point. A glance at Fig. 16 will make this clear.

Forward Rocker and Inside Back Rocker

The skater should take up his R O F at the point A, skate a half circle and rock to R O B. He should hold this edge till he has reached (and gone a foot or so beyond) another complete half circle, when he should put down at B, with as strong a stroke as he can, his L I B. This he must hold, preparing for his I B rocker, which should be placed on the near side of his centre opposite to where his right foot made its R O F rocker, and the resulting L I F edge must be brought to the off-side of the point A at which his right foot started, and from which it will now start again. Here is the object of bringing his L I F edge to the off-side of his point; if he approached it on the near side he would start R O F again on a different line.

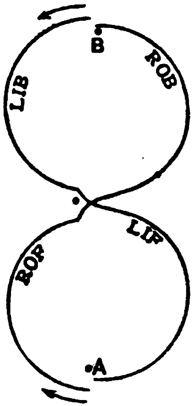

FIG. 16

As in the forward rocker eight, it is necessary to hold the R O B edge till the distance from the centre is at its maximum, and it adds greatly to the ease and the speed of the figure if it is held till the middle line has been passed, and the edge is beginning to approach the centre again. Otherwise the velocity of the strike on to I B, which will have to rock and come in to the off side of the centre again, almost dies away before it gets there. The returning I B has to be skated on rather a flatter edge than the out-going R O F, unless the R O F is taken very slowly.

Inside Forward Rocker and Back Rocker

The shape of this eight is identical with the last, and the execution of it far easier, since a much more powerful strike can be obtained from the R I B after the first rocker on to the L O B, than from the R O B on to the L I B. Also both rockers in this eight are much easier than in the preceding one, especially the second, which in this case is an O B rocker, the easiest of the series.

Forward Counter and Inside Back Counter

The shape of this eight and the manner of placing it is identical with the rocker and back rocker eights. It is much easier than its corresponding rocker, since here the second turn is an I B counter, which requires only an emphasization of the travelling position of I B, and not a reversal of it. Care should be taken not to get on to a flat edge after this second counter in too great an anxiety to arrive back at the starting-point. If the turn itself is skated clean, there should be enough pace to skate a firm well-rounded edge.

Inside Forward Counter and Back Counter

Difficult. But though the skater knows that he has to get home on an O B counter, he should skate his I F counter largely and light-heartedly, getting well out from his centre, for the further he gets away on his R I B after the first counter, the longer space he will have to prepare for the horror that is in store for him. While learning it therefore he will skate a rather curly R I F and a firm, bold R I B. He will then give himself room to prepare for his L O B counter, and not find himself, after it, so hopelessly distant from his starting-point, since he has made a rather curly R I F to which his L O F after the counter corresponds. But having familiarized himself with the discomforts of the figure, it is to be hoped he will learn to despise them and equalize his edges. The great point is to be thoroughly prepared before the back counter, the attitude for which is the same as that of the O B bracket which was spoken of at length, and the preparation for it is the difficult thing. If the preparation has been properly made the turn is simple enough.

Eights Starting on Back Edges

If anybody (no matter who) starts from his centre on a back edge and makes one turn, he will clearly arrive at his centre on a forward edge. If, then, he means to skate back eights with one turn in them, he must get on to the same back edge again, which is only to be done with a Choctaw at the centre. All back eights with one turn or one bracket can be skated in this manner, and all rocker and counter eights can be skated analogously, the turn being made, not at the half-way house of the circle but, as before, at the centre. But there is no object to be served by separate inquiry into these: the principle of them all is the same, and their execution, which in every case is difficult, is but an application of what has already been said. It will suffice to take two instances, merely describing them.

Back Turns to a Centre

The skater stands a little way off his centre, and after getting way, starts a ROB at the centre. Half-way round his circle he makes a back turn, arriving at the centre on RIF. At the centre he makes a Choctaw on to LOB, puts down his back turn half-way round, and arrives again at the centre on LIF. He Choctaws again:

Example (ii):

Back Rocker at a Centre

The skater starts a ROB half-way round the circumference of his circle and skates an OB rocker at the centre. Arriving at the half-way house he Mohawks on to LOB, and skates an OB rocker at the centre, arriving on LOF where he started on ROF. He again Mohawks.

All these are very difficult figures, and all are excellent practice within limits. But they tend to hard, small skating, and, in the writer's opinion, should all be considered as slightly freaky in nature. Without doubt the finest skaters can execute some of them with a certain freedom and pace, but they are none of them in the least adapted to the learner. He will cramp and tie himself up on them, and allow himself to skate them badly for the sake of skating them at all. He is advised, therefore, not to attempt them till he has learned some, at any rate, of the two-turn back eights. These demand no acrobatic performances at the centre, since if he starts on a back edge and turns twice instead of once, he will arrive at the centre on a back edge, from which he will start with the second foot on another. Back eights, therefore, he is advised to consider as two-turn eights, not one-turn eights or three-turn eights, both of which demand a Choctaw at the centre or a Mohawk on the circumference.

To proceed then to back eights with two turns:

Back Two Turns

Not a very difficult eight. The best way to start it is to skate a L O B up to the centre, and from there take off on to R O B. It contains no counter-rotation movement, but the skater should not skate the two turns with a swing. Having made the R O B turn on to R I F, he should hold the R I F position correctly for a yard or two before beginning to prepare for the second turn on to R O B, which will bring him into his centre. On arriving at the centre he should turn his head over his right shoulder at the same moment as he makes his strike on to L O B, so that the right shoulder may immediately follow its lead and get into position.

Inside Back Two Turns

This is among the difficult eights. An inside back should be skated to the centre, and there the R I B be taken up. Since the skater's first turn is that on to R O F, which requires the greatest amount of rotation of all the simple turns, he will find that he has not got time fully to assume the correct I B position before preparing for the turn, which should be placed one-third of the way round the circle. He should content himself with getting about half round into I B travelling position, and then at once (starting with the head, which has to be brought to look over the right shoulder) set himself to prepare for the turn. His forward edge which follows should be skated in correct position, and it is very important to make the second turn quite clean, otherwise he will arrive at the centre on R I B very slow, and handicap himself over what is already a difficult stroke, namely, that on to another I B. The inside back which approaches the centre should be brought a little past it, for fear of the right foot when leaving the ice disturbing it. The head should be changed from looking towards the left shoulder on the R I B to its direction looking towards the right shoulder on L I B just *before* the strike is made, so that no subsequent readjustment is necessary.

Outside Back Turn Bracket

Here the difficulty of setting up counter-rotation again comes in, and the skater is recommended after he has turned from R O B to R I F not to let his right shoulder lead at all strongly, but as soon as the turn is made to begin to get his left shoulder forward in preparation for the bracket. Otherwise, the advance of the right shoulder and its immediate falling-back again into the position for the R I F bracket will make it very difficult for the skater to be ready in time for the bracket, while the shoulders, though trying to do the right thing, will appear to be making uneasy wriggling movements. The head should lead this movement of the left shoulder after the turn by looking outwards, away from the centre. Though in the first class optional figures of the National Skating Association first test this eight is not awarded high marks, it is very hard to execute it smoothly and well.

Inside Back Turn Bracket

There is not a pleasant moment from start to finish. The strike is difficult (inside back to inside back), the rotation for the turn is difficult, and the moment that has been effected, the counter-rotation has to be set up for the bracket. This must be started as soon as the turn from RIB to ROF is made: the head must begin at once to look towards the left, and the left shoulder must be strongly pressed back. If this preparation is not begun at once, it will be incomplete before the skater has arrived at the point where he should place his bracket. He will then have to make his bracket too late and too near the centre, or try to effect it with a violent jerk that will probably land him on the ROB instead of the RIB, which commonly happens when an attempt is made to force a bracket.

Outside Back Bracket Turn

Probably the hardest of all the two-turn eights. It cannot be skated very slowly, for there is so much readjustment to be done on the RIF edge after the bracket and before the turn, that unless it is started at some little speed, the RIF edge will die away as soon as, if not before, the turn is made.

The skater, therefore, should start on his ROB with sufficient speed to bring him round a twenty-foot circle, and as soon as he has left his centre prepare for his bracket, getting his head well round to the right, in which position, it may be noticed, it will remain for the greater part of the RIF edge. On the ROB bracket itself the foot should be brought round as far as it possibly can, for, unless the skater gets a light edge on his RIF he has no chance at all of getting round into position for his turn. And once on this edge he will feel at first as if it was impossible to set up rotation for his turn, and he will certainly make many attempts before he succeeds in doing so. But let him give his head a chance! The shoulders feel so fixed after this bracket, so opposed to turn-rotation, that it is practically impossible to move them in the right direction unless the head shows the way. The head then, when the preparation for the turn begins, should be moved strongly back from the right (in which position it has been since the preparation for the bracket began) towards the left. This is the only practicable way of getting the left shoulder to begin to go back and the right to advance for the turn. And even when they have started, it is difficult to make them go far enough, and the turn at first will be made with a great effort, as if the body was thrown at it.

A curious feature in this eight, and one that has been noticed by others, is the rapidity with which one seems to lose speed on the RIF after the bracket, while preparing for the turn. There must, I suppose, be a fighting edge set up owing to the checking of the counter-movement and the setting up of the opposite rotation. But it seems to me more noticeable in this eight than in others, where the same manœuvre has to be gone through. Or perhaps it is only that we all think we are skating back-brackets at a greater speed than we really are.

Inside Back Bracket Turn

There is no special feature in this eight, the two difficulties of it consisting in the inside back strike at the centre and the necessity of stopping the counter-rotation of the bracket and setting up the rotation necessary for the turn. The head should be moved but little during the whole figure, but should look inwards towards the centre, being changed, however, just before the strike at the centre into position for the new L I B edge.

Back Two Brackets

This difficult eight must be started in the same way as the O B bracket turn, with preparation for the bracket beginning immediately on leaving the centre. The second bracket comes much more easily than the corresponding turn, since there is no fresh rotation to be set up, but the counter-rotation of the bracket is merely renewed on the I F edge.

Inside Back Two Brackets

This again, though difficult, is easier than the I B bracket turn, since no change of rotation is necessary.

This completes the series of one- and two-turn eights. Of the further turns it is not needful to speak, since they present no fresh features. All the above are excellent practice in giving the skater accuracy in placing his turns, and in that most important and difficult feat of checking one rotation and setting up another without disturbance to the edge. He should not, however, practise these to the exclusion of the large turns skated at an orange or free on the ice, since they will tend, if too much cultivated, to give him hard edges. But taken in conjunction with other figures they will much improve his skating, teaching him, among other things, how to prepare for turns quickly when speed is necessary.

Qs and Reverse Qs

Qs consist of changes of edge followed by a turn, and can be skated from any edge backward or forward with any turn, simple, rocker, counter or bracket, put in. The same general instruction applies to them all, namely, that each edge should be skated in appropriate attitude, while the turn should never be laid down until the skater has travelled some distance on his second edge. The tendency of every skater at first, especially when a difficulty like the I B turn or the O B counter is coming, is to prepare for the turn before he has travelled in the correct attitude of his edge. In the R O B Q, for instance, which he should get on to from a forward turn, he should skate his O B for a full half circle, then change his edge on to I B, and remain travelling on that in the correct position, with his head looking in the direction of progress and the left shoulder leading, till he has made another half circle. He should then (getting well back on his skate) prepare for the I B turn. Otherwise there are no special directions of any sort to be given. If he has mastered his changes of edge and has a good acquaintance with his turns, the Qs follow as a corollary.

Reverse Qs

In all reverse Qs the turn is made first and the change afterwards. As in the Qs the skater should travel in correct position on each of the three edges before making his preparation for turning or changing his edge. He should, in the case of the rocker reverse Qs, be very sure that he does not change his edge because he cannot hold it. The edge after the R O F rocker, for instance, should in all cases be held till he is quite comfortable on it and travelling in the correct position with his head looking along his line of progress and the left shoulder leading.

Some of these reverse Qs are necessarily difficult, as, for instance, the O B bracket reverse Q and O B counter reverse Q, since in order to make real reverse Qs of them, and hold, after the turn, edges of any length and good curvature, the turn itself has to be taken at a considerable pace.

CHAPTER VII

Combined skating—Definition of terms.

COMBINED figures are skated by two or more skaters, who all, in obedience to the orders of one of them, who is known as the caller, and states (in a calm but loud voice) what is to be done, start from a centre placed on the ice, and, having been obedient, return to it again. But having returned, there is no break in their proceedings; without pause (until they have finished their set), in obedience to further orders, they leave their centre again to do further evolutions, or to repeat the evolutions they have already been through, starting on the other foot. They may be called upon to skate various edges (and all the edges), various turns (and all the turns), various changes of edge (and all the changes of edge). More than that is not conceivably demanded of them.

The simplest form of combined figure is that skated by two persons, one of whom will be the caller. These two must stand opposite each other, two or three yards away from the centre, which will lie between them, and on the caller saying what is to be done, they will simultaneously skate up to the orange to get a start, and having arrived at the orange, proceed to skate what the caller has called.

And here at once the rules begin.

Rule I. Every figure begins on the right foot; the original start, that is to say, is made on the right foot.

Rule II. The centre, in skating out from it, is always left on the *inside* of the curve on which the skater starts, exactly as he started to skate his eights to a centre.

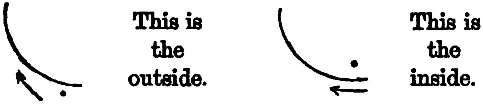

Fig. 17

Rule III. "Forward" means outside forward. If the caller wishes that inside forward should be skated he says so. The same applies to back edges. "Back" means outside back: if he wishes that inside back should be skated he says so.

Thus at the beginning of all things the caller A, with his partner B, standing opposite him, says "Forward." A and B then simultaneously skate up to the centre, and take up their right outside forward edge, each starting on the *left* of the centre. They have thus kept all three rules which ordain that (i) they begin on their right foot; (ii) they leave their centre on the inside of their curve; (iii) forward means outside forward.

Now the caller has started himself and his partner on a figure, and both are skating away from their centre on a forward edge. There are four things possible that can happen to that forward edge, and A settles in his own mind what he wishes to happen to it, and instructs B, calling to him. The four things are these:

(i) The right foot may cease doing O F edge, and the left foot do something.

(ii) The right foot may make a turn of some sort.

(iii) The right foot may change its edge.

(iv) The right foot may continue its forward edge till it arrives again at the centre.

We will take the first of these possibilities, because it comes first, and because it introduces another and most important rule. The right foot is skating O F: the caller wishes the left foot to do something.

Rule IV. The word "and" denotes a change of foot.

If, then, the caller wishes the forward edge on the right foot to cease and the left to skate an inside forward edge he says

"And inside"

because

Rule V. Every edge is supposed to be skated in the forward direction, unless it is stated that it is to be skated on the back edge.

(The caller, of course, may say, "And inside forward," but he need not: "and inside" denotes that the left foot has to skate, and that it has to skate on the inside forward edge.)

Should the caller wish the left foot to skate an outside forward edge, he will say, "and forward."

Now if the caller, having left the centre opposite his partner, and having said the one word "forward," does not want the left foot to skate at once, he will not use the word "and," but say (instead of forward) "forward turn," "forward change," or whatever he wants the right foot to do. Or if he wishes (to take the fourth case of what can happen) the right foot to skate a complete circle, he will not, as he calls for the first time, say "forward" but "forward entire" or "forward meet." "Forward entire" implies that an entire circle is to be skated, while if he calls "forward meet" it implies that the forward edge has to be continued till he and his partner meet again, which can only be at the centre.

"Forward entire" therefore means precisely the same as "forward meet," and since in any code like this of calling it is desirable to use as small a vocabulary as possible, consistent with absolute clearness, we will rule the word "entire" out of the call altogether. It is only mentioned because many callers still use it; it also appears in text-books, so it is as well to know what it means. But it is an unnecessary word and means precisely the same as "meet." "Meet" is retained instead of "entire," because, as will be seen, it is used, though in precisely the same sense, for figures in which "entire" would be a wrong direction. This point about "meet," however, shall be reserved until the manner of approaching the centre again is discussed.

It was stated in Rule V that every change of foot, from right to left or left to right, was signified by the word "and." But there are certain figures in skating, such as the Mohawk or Choctaw, that imply in themselves that a second foot is used, and so also does the phrase "once back" and its modifications, as used in combined skating. Only one modification need concern the learner at present, and that is the phrase "twice back," which implies (as indeed it says) that "once back" is skated twice over. And "once back" (as was mentioned before) means:

"forward turn and outside back."

It is a formula. "Twice back" therefore means "forward turn and outside back, and forward turn and outside back."

The skater will hear this so very often that the sooner he gets familiar with it the better. It shall therefore be stated in other words.

The caller has called "Twice back" as the figure begins. He (and his partner) therefore skate up to the centre, and leaving their centre inside (or to the right of their curves) start on right outside forward edge. They make a turn on right outside forward edge, which places them on right inside back. They then put down a left outside back edge, assume the correct travelling position on left outside back, start their right outside forward turn again, skate it, and put down a left outside back. They have then skated "Once back + once back" = "Twice back."

Now these two skaters are starting from a "centre," and the fact that they start from a centre implies that there is a circumference, just as there was a circumference when the single skater was starting from his centre and performing his turn or his two turns. So also in combined skating: the circumference is the outline of an imaginary circle, of which the centre he has just left is the central point. But here a difference between combined and single skating comes in: the centre in combined skating is a real centre of a circumference that goes equi-distantly all round it, whereas in single skating the centre (so-called) was a spot from which the skater started to make an independent circle, returning to this centre again, which was really on its circumference. This difference is worth grasping, for the use of the word "centre" in these two different senses often confuses the beginner. Here, in combined figures, his centre (the orange or what not at which he has started) is the real centre of his circle, not the intersection of two circles.

Rule VI. It is the skater's business to get as soon as possible (within certain limits) on to the circumference of this circle, and to remain there until he is told by the caller to quit it. His last stroke on the circumference before the one that takes him back to his centre he should in every case make to curl inwards a little towards the centre, in order to help him towards the right direction for his stroke to the centre.

Now this imaginary circumference, of which he has left the centre, is at first puzzling to the beginner. He does not know where it is, and his ignorance is quite excusable since its distance from the centre varies. But to try to give him some idea of it, he may be told that it is the furthest distance from the centre that he expects to reach and skate on (though there are exceptions which do not concern him yet), *and that two strokes will be sufficient to get him there.*

Thus if the caller says "once back and forward meet," he will skate a forward three and an outside back, arriving during his outside back on this imaginary circumference. The caller has also said "*and* forward meet": after his back edge, therefore, he will skate a forward stroke with the unemployed foot, and meet the caller at the only place he can meet him at, *i.e.*, the centre.

Rule VII. Two strokes generally take the skater out on to his circumference, on which he will continue to move unless called back to the centre or directed otherwise.

For example, if "twice back" is called, he will skate a forward three and an outside back. He will then skate another forward three and another outside back at about the same distance from the centre which he reached on his first outside back, which is the circumference. Of course, if the call consists only of one stroke, *e.g.*, "forward meet" or "forward turn meet," there is no question about the two strokes taking him to the circumference, since he has to go out and return on one stroke. But if "once back and forward meet" is called, he will get to his imaginary circumference—the furthest point from his centre—not on his forward three, but on his back. One stroke on the other hand takes him back from his circumference to the centre. The reason for this is that on going out from his centre he is getting up speed, and requires two strokes to go out. But on his return he is travelling faster: one stroke is sufficient.

The skater, even in his most elementary stages, will do well to try to grasp this theory of the imaginary circumference, to which two strokes take him, and on which he has to execute all turns, changes of edge, etc., that the caller directs, until he is told by him to come back to the centre or (as he may find later on) move further away from it. That, however, does not concern him yet. He is still employed on getting to the circumference and returning from it to the centre. We will consider this question of his return.

Rule VIII. The use of the word "meet"[1] or "pass" or "centre" in a call means that on the stroke (or turn) to which any of these three words is affixed, the skaters have to return to their centre, to meet there or merely to pass it and each other, or to execute some turn or change of edge at the centre.

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[1] Many callers make use of the word "in" instead of "meet," of which it is the precise equivalent. "Forward in" (into the centre) is the same as "forward meet." But as callers should

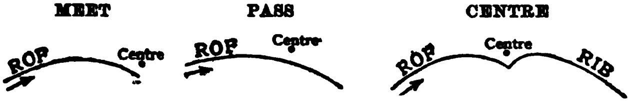
Now these meetings or passings, or the execution of some turn at the centre may clearly take place on either side of the centre, to the left or right of it. The skater has been out on his imaginary circumference till the call "forward meet," let us say, is given him. He then has to skate in to his centre, leaving the centre *outside* his curve of approach, exactly in the same way in which he approached it in his eights.

Similarly if the word "pass" is used he has to skate into his centre, and pass it, *i.e.*, continue the curve on which he approached it, leaving it *outside* his curve.

Similarly, if the caller uses the word "centre" in bringing the skaters back to their centre, they approach it, leaving it *outside* their curves. But the word "centre" is never used alone; it is always further qualified by a specification of what has to be done at the centre. Only two things can be done there, a turn of some kind may be made there (counting Mohawks and Choctaws as turns, as well, of course, as all rockers, brackets, and counters), or the edge may be changed there.

be as uniform in their language, and as simple as possible, it is suggested that "meet" should always be used.

Three diagrams are given (Fig. 18), illustrating the use of these three words, "meet," "pass," and "centre," which alone bring the skaters back to their centre.



Forward meet. Forward pass. Forward centre turn.

Fig. 18

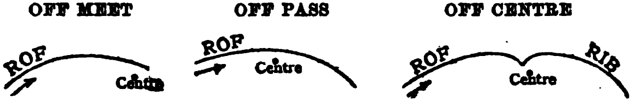
Now in all these cases the centre is left (or performed at) on the outside of the curve, which is also known as the near side of the centre, for the very excellent reason that the skater does approach it on the side nearest him. This brings us to a most important rule, quite simple in itself, but one, somehow, which every skater in the world fails to understand at first, namely, the difference between the near side and the other side of the centre, which is called the "off-side." It is hoped that the explanation of the word "near," which means exactly what it says, may help him to understand it.

Rule IX. The centre must always be approached on the near side, which is the side nearest to the skater when he goes towards it on whatever edge. The centre thus approached will lie outside his curve of approach.

Rule X. Should the caller wish the skaters to approach the centre on the far side, he prefixes to one of the three words of recall (namely, meet, pass, centre), the word "off"; they thus become "off-meet," "off-pass," "off-centre."

The curve of approach to the centre will then lie outside or beyond the centre, which will lie inside the curve of approach.

Now these two rules sound extraordinarily simple, but there is no one who has not at one time felt a difficulty in understanding them. Three diagrams are therefore given of "off" approaches to the centre, which should be compared with the approaches on the near side.


OFF MEET OFF PASS OFF CENTRE

Forward off meet. Forward off pass. Forward off-centre turn.

FIG. 19

So, too, with regard to centre and off-centre when "centre change" or "off-centre change" is called. The change of edge is made opposite to the centre, and on the near side of it in "centre change," with the centre outside the curve of approach; on the other side of it in "off-centre change," with the centre inside the curve of approach.

Summing up, then, this preliminary matter, the skater should by this time know that he originally leaves his centre on the right outside forward edge, unless he is specially told not, and that the right outside forward edge is called "forward." He must continue on his right foot until the caller uses the word "and," upon which he must use his left foot, unless the caller announces a manœuvre like Once-back or Mohawk, which of itself denotes the use of the other foot. By the time he has completed two strokes, he may expect to be travelling along the imaginary circumference of his circle, and there he must remain till some call, introducing one of the words "meet," "pass," or "centre," brings him back to his centre again, or past it. But however long the call is, however many turns and changes and brackets and Mohawks and rockers he is told to skate, he continues to skate them on his circumference, unless he is recalled to the "centre," or told to go further away.

We will start him again, therefore, at the centre, in order that he may get familiar at once with one or two more of the few remaining terms used in combined skating that he does not yet know.

The caller has called "forward" (which is R O F), after which he calls "and inside" (which, therefore, must be L I F). By the time he gets to the end of this stroke he is on his imaginary circumference, moving round it on the L I F towards his right, *circling*, as it is called, along the circumference. Let us then suppose that the caller after "forward and inside" calls "and forward"; he will go on moving or circling on the R O F to the right. Or if the caller says "and forward turn," he will make his turn and still carry on his course to the right.

But the caller may desire him, without coming into the centre, to alter the direction of his circling, *i.e.*, to circle towards the left. In that case he affixes to any call the word "about," and the skater thereupon continues whatever edge he is on until, like a ship, he has gone about and is circling in the other direction.

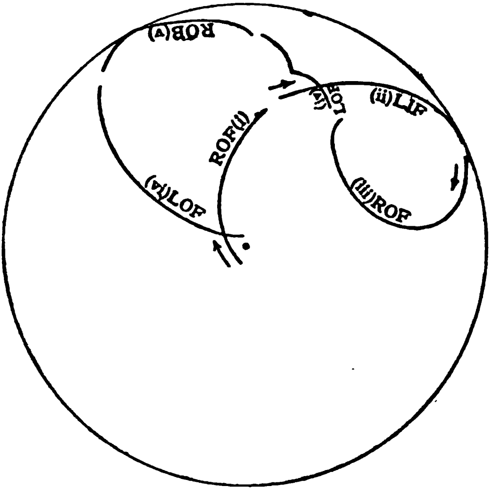


FIG. 20

Rule XI. A call with "about" in it alters the direction in which the skater has been circling.

A diagram (with the strokes numbered) will at once explain this and also illustrate how the two strokes carry the skater to the circumference which is indicated in a faint line, while the skater's strokes are marked strongly. The caller has called "Forward and inside and forward about," and the skater thereupon skates R O F, L I F, R O F. But the second R O F is held on till from moving towards the right he is now moving towards the left. He has to leave his imaginary circumference to skate this, but since the caller has not said either "pass," "meet" or "centre," he does not go into his centre.

We will continue the call a little; three strokes, all numbered, have been taken, and the skater is now skating towards the left, instead of towards the right, having changed his direction on the word "about."

The Caller. "And once back, and forward meet."

Thereupon the skater, since the once back does not call him into the centre again, must regain his position (more or less) on the circumference and skate

(i) A forward turn on the left foot.

(ii) A back outside on the right,

which strokes are labelled (iv) and (v).

He then is told to skate his sixth stroke

"And forward meet."

Upon which, since the back edge has been skated on the right, he gets into proper position with his left shoulder well leading and his head well round (as before a R O B turn), and skates L O F to his centre, and to the near side of it.

The skater is advised to read the foregoing, following it on the diagram, until he perfectly understands it, for though he will not yet be called upon to skate it, he should grasp the placing of the strokes, the effect of an "about," the general shape of a "Once back" and the manner of meeting, which he will observe is skated on a rather straighter stroke than any except the first stroke, which takes him away from the centre.

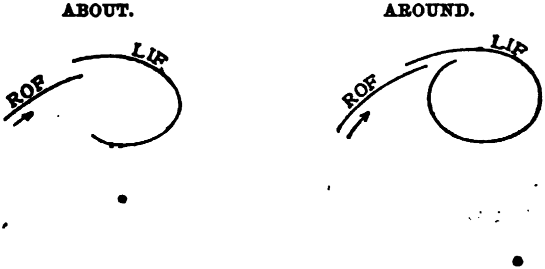
And with this in his mind let him remember that when he is skating with one other skater only, or skating as one of the first pair (when four are skating or when six are skating), *that he has to travel as straight as he can consistently with keeping on his edge and not getting on the flat, on the stroke that leaves the centre, and on the stroke that brings him back to his centre.* He cannot learn this too soon or forget it too late.

There are only three other words with which he need concern himself; the first of these is "around." "Around" means about + about, just as "twice back" means "once back + once back."

Since then "about" altered the direction in which he was travelling, "around," which is equivalent to two abouts, will alter it again.

Rule XII. When "around" is called, he must make a complete circle, so that at the end of it he is travelling in the same direction as when it began.

Diagram of "About" and "Around" (Fig. 21)



Forward and inside about. Forward and inside around.

Under this heading of "about" and "around," two further formulas may be introduced to the skater's notice, which he will frequently hear and which should at once cease to puzzle him, for they are quite logical and simple, (the two terms are not always identical). And these two formulas are merely "about of" (something) and "around of" (something). The "about" and "around" remain exactly as he learned them; the word "of" introduces something to be skated, while the "about" or "around"—the edge that changes the direction—is in progress.

Thus "about" is called, and the skater changes the direction of his circling; "about of a turn" is called, and he, during the change of direction in his circling movement, puts in a turn.

He is skating, for instance, on LIF. The next call is

"And forward about of a turn."

He therefore skates ROF, turns, and will reverse his direction on the circumference exactly as he would have done if "And forward about" had been called. He must put a forward turn into his "about" stroke, so that he is travelling, after making the turn, in the direction that "about" would have put him on to. Into the "about" stroke has come a turn; that is all.

"Around of" follows precisely the rule of "around," just as "about of" follows the rule of "about." He is skating, to take the same instance, on LIF, and "forward around" is called. He will therefore kindly take a stroke of ROF, and continue it till it has made a complete circle, and the next stroke will take him in the same circumferential direction as before. Now if "Around of a turn" is called, he will begin his stroke in the same way, then turn, and hold his edge (RIB) till he is travelling on RIB towards his right. He has started on ROF, skating towards the right, and in his complete circle of "around" he will have put in a turn.

The second word is "out." Whenever the skater hears "out" affixed to a stroke or a turn, it implies he has to skate the stroke or turn outwards away from the centre, whether he is already skating on his circumference or not. It is a perfectly simple and easy direction, and implies only that he must lay down his stroke in the direction that will take him further away.

The third word is "circle," a term introduced in the latest revision, and one, as the skater will find later on, of the highest value. It defines (like "out") the direction in which he is to lay down his stroke; and it means that he is to lay it down on the circumference, and thus neither add to nor diminish his distance from his centre, but do his circling movement on the circumference. It is prefixed to the call of the stroke which has to be placed on the circumference, or is added at the end of the stroke before.

Thus (in whatever position the skater is) when he hears, for instance, the call "Forward turn circle, and——" he knows that whatever follows the "and" is to be skated on the circumference, and not go either further out from or nearer into the centre. His distance from the centre is defined. The word is not very frequently employed by most callers, since it is understood that the majority of calls bring the skater on to his circumference by the end of his second stroke out; and that he remains there until recalled by the use of the word "meet" (or in), "pass," or "centre." But in the course of his experience the skater will often find that there is a possible choice of direction in which to place his stroke. The word "circle" or "out" defines the direction.

NOTE

[The beginner need not trouble himself at present about this Note.]

It was found necessary a few years ago, to revise the old system of calling to meet up-to-date requirements, for the previous revision, which took place in 1891, was found not to provide for all the things that skaters in combined figures now wished to do. For in these years the development of combined skating had been quite prodigious, and it was necessary that a Committee should bring the system of calling into an authorized condition to deal with this development.

As a whole the work of this Committee, appointed by the Skating Club, was quite admirable, and many of the points in calling already noticed were due to them. They introduced, for instance, the two excellent directions concerning "about of" and "around of" mentioned above; but in a few points it has been found that their provisions went a little too far when it came to the practical business of skating them. The result has been that some of these provisions, all of which were framed so as to secure the utmost possible accuracy in calling, and leave the skater no opportunity of making a mistake in following the directions given him by the caller, have been practically abandoned, and are not used by any of the callers at the skating-centres in Switzerland. This does not in the least detract from the deep debt of gratitude which all figure-skaters owe to the admirable labours of the Committee, which dispelled whole tempests of nebulosity and doubt which previously existed.

One of these provisions, which has lapsed, concerns the skating of "around" and "around of."

Definition 13 reads:

"Around is only used in radial movements (movements, that is, from and to the circumference), and means that the skater must so direct the course of, and continue, the curve upon which he finds himself when the word is called, that he travels through approximately *three parts* of a circle and reaches a circling position. . . ."

Now the word used in this definition, which has been abandoned (and with it the definition as it stands), is the third word "only." It is, of course, possible to skate an "around" curve in the radial position (going out from or into the centre); but "around" curves are now called and skated on the circumference. So, too, are "arounds of" skated on the circumference; and, in matter of practical application, "arounds" and "arounds of" are skated there only, instead of on the radius. Thus "forward around of a turn" as a call starting at the centre is practically unknown, though it could be skated, and all skaters should understand it, but "around" and "around of" on the circumference (*e.g.*, twice back and forward around of a turn—or two turns—) is a very common call.

In this revision "about about" is given as the equivalent of an "around" on the circumference; equivalent it certainly is, but the call is no longer used. "Forward about turn about" is, of course, a constant call, since it lays down precisely when the turn is to be skated, namely, as soon as the skater has gone about; but "Forward about about" has been practically superseded (when skated on the circumference) by "Forward around."

Similarly, the fourteenth Definition has passed into disuse.

"14. Entire (when not preceded by 'By') means that the skater must return to the spot where the feet were last changed."

As has been said already, on starting from the centre, "Forward entire" is still used to denote that a complete circle must be made which returns to the centre, but "forward meet" was suggested as a simpler equivalent. Whereas on the circumference, since "arounds" are now constantly called there, the call "entire" ceases to be of use, since it is exactly equivalent to "around."

The definition proceeds as follows:

"'Entire,' when preceded by the word 'By,' means that the skater must return to the change of feet, 'change,' or turn of any variety immediately preceding the term 'By.' (Thus any number of movements, simple or compound, may intervene between 'By' and 'Entire.')"

Now I do not think this is very easy to understand,

and I have known other skaters find a difficulty in comprehending it. But it seems to be providing for what is now usually called "around of" on the circumference. By definition 13 "around of" was not applicable to the circumference, but only to the radius; and this "By," "Entire," apparently provides a term for "arounds of" skated on the circumference. But since now callers are agreed in calling "arounds" and "arounds of" on the circumference, this provision of "By," "Entire," has not been used.

"Definition 15, concerning a manœuvre called 'loops,' is also not used now. 'Loops' are not, of course, the Continental loops; since Mohawks and turns may be skated in 'loops of,' which apparently bear the same relation to 'loop' as 'around of' bears to 'around'; but 'loop' means leaving a 'curve of larger radius to skate a complete circle on one edge of smaller radius, returning to the original curve at the spot where he left it. . . ."

This, again, appears to be so little distinguishable from "around," that "loop," as well as "loop of" (which so closely resembles "around of') have been absorbed into the terms in commoner use.

CHAPTER VIII

Combined skating—First steps—The duties of the caller.

THE beginner is strongly recommended to make his first attempts in skating combined figures not by himself, for that teaches him very little, nor in a set where two others or more are skating in the fashion known as "simultaneous," which will be spoken of later, nor yet as one in a party of four who are skating "crossing pairs," because he will inevitably put everybody else out, but with one other skater who has had a little actual practice.

For in combined skating it is quite impossible to skate entirely on book-knowledge; a skater may have at his fingers' ends all that has ever been written on the subject, and yet be utterly unable to put it into practice, simply because no written ideal of how to skate combined figures can ever be absolutely put into practice. There is a considerable deal of elasticity, of give and take, between even the most accomplished skaters, which cannot be put down, simply because nobody can tell exactly what it will be, for it depends not on theory, but on the practice the eye gets of judging the pace, the sort of curves on which individual skaters are placing their edges, or the distance from the beginning of the stroke at which they make their turns. All these things vary, not only according to the individual skaters, but according to the quality of the ice, and it is quite impossible to say how long any one edge should be held before or after a turn. It is only in practice that the skater will learn these things, working originally with someone who perhaps is no stronger a skater than himself, until by familiarity with the actual practice of skating, he becomes by degrees a moderate combined skater, and, it is to be hoped, eventually a first-class one.

But before he starts on his first set, there are a few things, apart from the elementary knowledge of the meaning of the language which the caller will use (expletives are not referred to) which will start him in a certain kind of form. It may be added that the form insisted on in the earlier part of this book with regard to the carriage of the body, the direction in which the head should turn, etc., are absolutely binding in combined skating, since here more than ever it is necessary to preserve uniformity, to skate in such a manner as will give the firmest edges and the cleanest turns, and to look where you are going. A few of these directions will (among fresh information) be repeated.

Now the commonest way to start a figure, particularly if beginners are skating, is the call of "once back" or "twice back." There are many other ways of leaving the centre, but this particular call is made more often than any other, because it is a very easy way of getting up speed, so that when the skater arrives at his circumference he may be travelling with some rapidity. It is not expected of the beginner that he will at once travel with rapidity on it, but he will very soon learn to do so if he skates it in the right way. And the right way to skate it (the right way being the sort of way in which most first-class skaters do it) is—more or less—this. The beginner should follow the explanation on the above diagram.

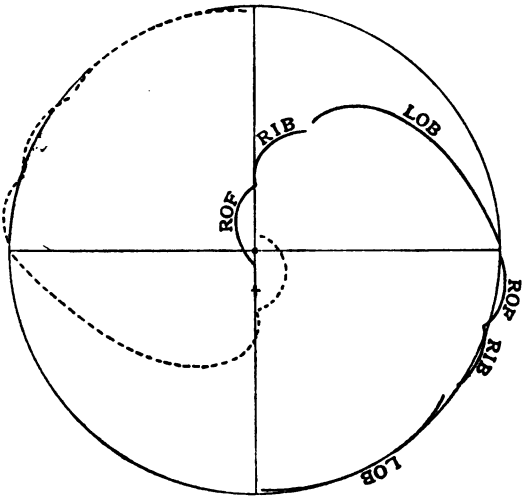


FIG. 22

He should imagine himself standing (as he will) at the spot marked with a cross. Opposite him will be the centre and at about a similar distance on the other side of the centre, so that he, the centre, and his partner, are all in a straight line, stands the caller. At a distance from the centre, which will grow greater as his skating gets stronger, runs the imaginary circumference of the circle from the left of the centre of which, on the right outside edge, he will presently start. He must now imagine that the line running through his partner, the centre, and himself, is continued both ways till it cuts the circumference of his circle, and at right angles to that, dividing the whole circle up into four equal parts, is another diameter.

Now, when he starts his once back or twice back, leaving the centre on his right, he should make his turn about on the diameter on which his partner is standing, that is to say on an edge with little curvature in it, and bring the tail (the RIB) of his turn still with little curvature out towards his circumference. When he puts down his LOB, it should travel still with little curvature outwards, till it cuts the other diameter of the circle at right angles to which he was standing. He will then have arrived also at the circumference of his circle.

That (more or less) is the right shape for "once back"; it should occupy one quarter of the whole circle, and reach the circumference about the end of the back.

Should "twice back" be called, the second "once back" should similarly occupy one quarter of the circle, but this will lie, as in the diagram, along the circumference. In dotted lines are given the movements of the caller. An approximate rule may be introduced here.

Rule XIII. Generally speaking, two strokes, whether taken from the centre or along the circumference, occupy one quarter of the circle. A long figure, however, such as a Q or a reverse Q, is about the equivalent of two strokes, and will reach the circumference.

But it must be again insisted on that such a direction is only given to enable the beginner to understand the *sort* of shape in which the Once and Twice back is generally skated by good skaters. What he must attend to much more than that in these, his first *practical* steps in figure skating, is what his partner, the caller, is doing.

For it is his business (no less than his partner's) to keep square, that is to say, the line drawn through the two skaters should throughout the figure pass through the centre, and he must put down his strokes and make his turns as nearly as possible at the same moment as the caller and opposite the caller. And here comes in the give and take which no book can teach. It is vastly more important to keep square with his partner than to skate most sublimely out of the square. And the caller, he must never forget, is King, Emperor, Autocrat. If the caller skates dreadful curly edges, his partner must do so too; if the caller skates quite flat edges, so must his partner, if committing even this crime will make the line between the caller and himself pass through the centre. If the caller skates very slowly, so must he; if the caller skates faster than he likes, he must hurry after him; if the caller skates a turn he cannot skate he must fudge, put down both feet, do anything, so that only he may be on the proper foot and on the proper edge and opposite the caller. And here we come to the golden rule.

Keep the figure square at any personal sacrifice. Nobody cares really what you do, as long as you are square and come in rightly; you may skate on both feet all the time if you choose, but DO keep square. (Also be comforted: severe things are going to be said to the caller also, when his paragraph comes.)

There is a moral to all this seeming digression, which is another golden rule. You are requested to keep square with your partner. You cannot do so unless you see where he is. You cannot see where he is unless you look at him. Therefore (this is the golden rule) look at your partner whenever you feel you can manage it. He will look at you, too; it is not a one-sided affair: if you are hurrying up your turn when not really ready for it, wishing he would not prepare so quickly, he is probably also delaying his turn, wondering when on earth you are going to begin to get your left shoulder round. The important thing to remember is that you must sacrifice yourself for the good of the figure. He knows that probably better than you, and is doing it all the time, though to him it may have become, as it soon will to you, not a conscious effort, but an instinct.

It is all this that can only be learned by skating with a partner. Each skater—since no two people even in the very highest flights skate naturally quite alike—has to be all the time in an adaptable frame of mind, and in a frame of body which at once obeys these promptings. That is exactly why combined skating is the hardest and, at the same time, by far the most enjoyable form of the sport. Everybody wants to skate his best, and skate in the most correct way, but that laudable desire should be secondary to the public good, which is the squareness of the figure.

The Strokes in Combined Figures. The Once-back Stroke. (Inside back to Outside Back)

The skater has been told how to take up the O B edge after the inside back edge, but he has not yet learned how to make a real stroke of it, a stroke, that is to say, that not only does not diminish the speed already acquired, but immensely adds to it. And as the frequency of "Once back" and "twice back" in combined skating is due to the fact that it is an easy way of getting up speed, a word about this is necessary.

The skater is supposed to have just made his turn on the R O F to R I B, which is the first part of a "Once back." He should take great care always to get into the correct position for this turn, with the left shoulder well forward, else he will scrape it and begin the manœuvre which is meant to increase his speed by diminishing it. But having made his turn he should not get into the complete travelling position for R I B, but at the most glance over his left shoulder after the turn, and immediately turn his head back till it is looking in the direction he came from. At that moment, while looking backward along the path he has traversed, he should employ the backwards body swing as he puts down his L O B, and immediately turn his head over his right shoulder into the correct travelling position for L O B. Into this L O B stroke he should put not only the body-swing, but the shove-off from R I B, which was employed, if he remembers, in skating back outside edges. In those the foot leaving the ice (not on the cross stroke) turned for a moment on to the inside edge, and the strike came from the forepart of the skate. It is just that strike that gives him pace here. But above all things let him remember not to put the toe *point* of the skate into the ice. The strike in combination with the body-swing comes from the inside edge near the toe, but not from the toe.

Inside Back to Inside Back

Already fully treated of in inside back stroke.

Inside Back to Inside Forward

This is a stroke which is constantly occurring in combined skating, and at first the skater will find it a difficult one to take up and to keep light, but will feel a tendency to curl in on the IF. It occurs most frequently in such a call as ROF turn to RIB and LIF. On this stroke the skater, instead of hardly getting into RIB position as on the Once-back stroke, should get very fully into RIB position, leading strongly with his left shoulder and looking well to the left. He should dwell some time on this RIB stroke, and as the moment comes for his taking his LIF stroke, should emphasize his position almost as if he was going to skate an IB bracket, and put down his left foot in as spread-eagled a position as possible, so that the new stroke continues the curve of the first one. If he does this he will find he is on a light edge, and already in position with his left shoulder leading. He will then be in proper attitude to prepare for anything the left foot may be called upon to do. Otherwise he will be on a hard edge.

Inside Back to Outside Forward

Already treated of under the forward turn to a centre.

Outside back to Outside Forward

On the outside back the skater should get in correct travelling position, and as the new stroke approaches, emphasize it a little till he feels ready to do the turn ROB to RIF. His body is then in the right position to take up instead the LOF stroke. The foot should be turned round as far as possible, and speed should be obtained from the forward body-swing and the shove-off from the inside edge of the ROB, on to which the foot turns for a moment as it leaves the ice.

Outside Back to Inside Back

Here, as in the stroke IB to OB, the proper travelling position (*i.e.* if the right foot is skating ROB, looking towards the left shoulder with the left shoulder leading) should be reversed at the strike, and the head should be turned towards the right, with the right shoulder leading though not so strongly as in the OB bracket. The strike should be taken up with the left foot crossing behind the right, and the speed obtained from the backward body-swing and a shove-off from the outside of the blade of the skate leaving the ice, and near the toe of it. It is, of course, perfectly simple to *place* the left foot on LIB on the ice, merely continuing the curve of the ROB, but no pace can be obtained this way. But, by getting into position for the ensuing LIB while still on the right foot, as advised above, and crossing the left foot behind it, a very considerable speed may be obtained. The position of the body then wants no subsequent readjustment on the LIB: it is already in correct travelling position. The stroke is a most useful and indeed indispensable one, and should be practised by itself.

Outside Back to Outside Back

This stroke must always be taken off the OB cross-roll. It has already been fully dealt with.

Outside Back to Inside Forward

Already dealt with under the inside forward turn to a centre.

Of the strokes from forward to forward no more than was stated in the early part of the book need be said, while the strokes from forward edges to back edges are Mohawks and Choctaws already treated of.

THE CALLER AND HIS DUTIES

The caller not only has to direct the other skaters as to what is to be skated, but he has to set "the time, speed, and mode of skating all calls, and must be accurately followed by the other skaters." In a word, he has complete control over what has to be done and how it has to be done.

He requires, therefore, two essential qualifications: he must make his calls as clear as possible, not audible merely, but easily intelligible, and his own skating must be uniform. We will take these points in turn.

Now there are many positions in which all the skaters are looking outwards, away from the centre, such as on the beginning of the back of a once back, or in preparation for a forward bracket. The caller should avoid giving his orders when in such a position, or he will find difficulty in making himself heard, but wait till he is facing more or less towards the others instead of away from them. He should always speak slowly, and instantly repeat his call if it is asked for, or if, by looking at his partner, or the other pair, he sees that the call has not been understood. Nor should he give too long a call all at once, but deliver it in bits, so that the others know for about the next two strokes ahead what is coming. An example may be given.

He proposes to call:

"Twice back and forward and inside once bracket back about and forward and inside forward off centre-rock and inside forward Mohawk meet."

There is no mind capable of retaining all this if it is trumpeted out in one paragraph. It must be broken up. Since the beginning of this call is a familiar formula, he should call, before he and his partner skate up to the centre:

"Twice back and forward."

He should then wait until the forward edge has been just taken up and then call:

"And inside once bracket back about and forward."

(This is formula again; also on the back after the bracket his face will be turned away.)

He should then wait till the forward has been taken up and call:

"And inside forward off centre rock."

As soon as he has rocked he should call:

"And inside forward Mohawk meet."

Then, as he approaches the centre on his back edge, he should give out the first stroke or two of the next figure.

His calls should be made as intelligible as possible, and he should strenuously avoid puzzling his team by an involved way of stating what he wishes them to do. He should for this reason avoid even expressions like "back rocker Q," which of course is perfectly correct, but not so easy immediately to grasp as "back change rock." In the National Skating Association first-class set of combined there is a good instance of an involved call, when a simple one would have been better, in the excellent and difficult figure given there as "Twice back and back inside reverse centre turn Q," which is far more difficult to understand than "Twice back and back inside centre turn change" would have been. Indeed, many excellent callers, quite rightly, avoid calling Q or reverse Q at all, but state the figure instead in turns and edges.

Callers can do worse than this: when they want "Once back and forward" skated, they have been known to say "Once back, back Mohawk," and chuckle when the figure comes to a standstill, saying, "I thought I should have you over that!" This is probably an abstruse form of humour and wearisome; the caller's business is to make himself as easily intelligible as possible, not to break up the figure by being funny.

But given that he has the good intention, there is plenty more for him to do. He must gauge the capacity of the others, and adapt his calls and his size and speed in skating them to the powers of the weakest; and if, as may be the case, he is far the best skater of the team, he should not skate larger than the weakest of them, or call turns that they cannot reasonably hope to accomplish. If he has skated with the same persons before, he will know what their capabilities are; if he has not, it is his business to watch them very closely at the beginning of the figure, and though he has to set the speed and size, set such speed and size as they can keep up with.

He should observe, also, if the figure is getting out of the square at all, and if it is, not pursue his grim, relentless path, knowing that it is the business of the others to follow him, but instantly do his best, by calling something very easy, to enable the others to regain their places. Such a stroke as "forward about" or "inside about" is probably better than any other, for it is a long stroke without incident in it, and enables anyone who is behind to get into his place again on the "about."

Theoretically, he should repeat every figure, so that it is started once on the right foot and once on the left. But this is rather an academic proceeding, and greater variety and amusement can be had out of a quarter of an hour's combined if it is not too rigidly adhered to. He should, however, provide as much skating for the left foot as for the right.

He should take care not to call, provided there is plenty of room, too curly a set of figures, one, in fact, which keeps recalling the skaters to their centre before they have played about on the circumference, but keep the figure big with plenty of circumference changes and turns and Mohawks and Choctaws. Nor should his figures continually end with "meets," especially with "meets" preceded by some manœuvre that cannot be skated fast, so that his team crawl into their centre again, but vary the "meets" with any amount of "passes" and "centre calls," some goodly percentage of which, even when crossing fours or crossing sixes are being skated, he directs to be skated simultaneously. By every means in his power he should try to get variety into his calling, and with a view to this, though "twice back" is an excellent fast start to a figure, he should often use other means of getting the skaters out, so that they arrive on their circumference travelling easily and rapidly. Such alternative calls are:

Forward turn and inside back.
Forward and inside forward turn.
Forward Mohawk.
Forward change Mohawk.
Forward change turn.
Inside forward Mohawk.
Inside counter and back (once inside counter back).
Inside forward and forward turn.

Finally, if he himself is late, or if he finds himself in a difficulty through not being prepared for what he has called, let him fudge freely and immediately, and not keep his team waiting. For though he is autocrat, his motto should be "Ich dien."

CHAPTER IX

Crossing pairs—Simultaneous skating.

WHEN the skater has learned to know practically, on the ice and in obedience to a caller, how to leave the centre, has learned to get out on to his circumference with the smallest possible delay, to stop there, still over quite simple calls, until he is told to go away, and to return to his centre (on the proper side) with as light an edge as is consistent with not travelling on the flat of his skate, it is time that he should plunge into the added intricacies of what is known as "crossing pairs." There is another form of combined skating called "Simultaneous," which is easier than any form of crossing pairs, but he will find that a little knowledge of crossing pairs will make simultaneous-combined quite easy to him, whereas no amount of simultaneous skating will advance him one step in the more difficult business of a crossing four, which is the simplest form of crossing pairs. He is therefore advised to try to take his part in an easy crossing four before he goes on to the much simpler business of simultaneous.

In crossing fours he will stand, as before, a few yards back from his centre before the first call is made. But instead of being alone now, with his partner opposite him, there are to right and left of him two more skaters who, standing at right angles to him, will start to skate the figure called as soon as the first pair (the caller and his partner) have left the centre.

The partner of the caller, for reasons that will be given, has the easiest place of the four, and it is here that the beginner should learn his apprenticeship. As partner of the caller—who must always lead the figure, and skate in the first pair—he has only to skate square with the caller, and he has fulfilled the whole duty of man. The second pair have a more difficult task, if the figure is going to be square.

Now it has been already impressed on the beginner that he must get *out*, get away from his centre, as directly as he can, and when the call of recall to it is announced, must get back to it as directly as he can. The importance of this injunction is now manifest. The second pair cannot start till he and the caller are out and away; they cannot also get into the centre at the close of the call till the centre is clear, and the first pair have started on their second outward journey. The first pair, therefore, particularly in coming back to their centre, must skate direct edges, edges, that is to say, that are as light as possible, so as to get into the centre when they are recalled there, as speedily as may be, so that the second pair, who cannot come back to the centre (without collision) till the first pair have again left it, may not be compelled to skate hard curly edges, or to arrive at the centre in a crawling and moribund condition. So here we can formulate another rule.

Rule XIV. In crossing fours, the first pair should get away from the centre as directly as possible, and arrive at the circumference as quickly as possible. When the recall to the centre is announced, they should get in as directly as possible, consistently with the preservation of the edge they are travelling on.

The rule requires further comment. A and B begin under the direction of A, the caller. Y and Z, who are standing at right angles to them both, cannot start until the first pair have left the centre. It is their object to skate always with the centre in the direct line between them, and also to maintain their relative positions to A and B. They started at right angles to A and B, and they must remain at right angles to A and B whenever they can, which is always.

Now A and B have started first. Y and Z cannot start till A and B have left the centre. They desire also to keep at right angles to A and B, though A and B have had the start. In order to catch them up, in order, that is to say, to get at right angles to A and B again as soon as possible, they must make their edges a little more curved than those on which the first pair started. A and B, for instance, start on a forward edge. Y and Z start a moment afterwards. But if they start on the same curvature as A and B, it is clear that they, from having started last, will have lost their place a little. They may still be square to each other, but A, curving towards the right, will be nearer Y than he should be, if Y, starting to skate two seconds afterwards, has gone out on the same curve as A. We have therefore another rule.

Rule XV. In crossing fours, the second pair must make their outward edges rather more curved than those of the first pair.

Now to the practised skater this is an instinct, but one derived from a vast deal of experience in figures when he was one of the second pair, but could not keep his equidistance from the first. He has started a couple of seconds (or thereabouts) after the first pair, who already are curving on the R O F towards the right. If, then, the second pair start on the same curvature as the first, they will always be two seconds behind in point of distance, and will never get square at all. But if Y and X (skating second pair) skate out with more curvature to the right on the R O F than did the first pair, they will at the end of the first stroke preserve not only their proper position to each other, but their proper position also with regard to A and B, and though they will at the end of the first stroke be not so far distant from the centre as the first pair, they will already be in their proper relative positions, and will on the second stroke take their place on the circumference, and the whole figure will be absolutely square. But if they go out on the same curvature as A and B, they will have to hurry on their back strokes in order to get on the circumference at right angles to A and B.

All four have now got into their right relative positions on the circumference, *and they should all take their turns and changes, and fresh strokes simultaneously*, so long as they remain, in obedience to the caller's orders, on the circumference. This makes all the difference both to the look and accuracy of the figure, and to the pleasure of it. The second pair, having got to their right places, though they started a moment or two behind the first pair, may now skate absolutely in time with them, instead of continuing to put down their turns and other manœuvres after them. Then the call which brings them back to the centre is given.

Rule XVI. As in leaving the centre, so also in approaching it again, the second pair should make their edges rather more curved than those of the first pair.

The reason is obvious. They have all been skating in time together on the circumference, and still together they take up the stroke that is to bring them back to the centre. But the first pair skate in as directly as they can, while the second pair curve their edges more strongly. They thus have rather further to go, and will arrive at the centre after the first pair, who will already just have started on the next outward stroke. There will then be no delay and no retardation. As soon as the second pair reach the centre they will find it clear for them, and will again go out on edges more curved than the first pair, and instantly find their right places again.

Should the caller, however, direct a simultaneous pass or centre figure, the advantage of all being in time together on the circumference is equally plain. The stroke that brings them to the centre will be taken up simultaneously, and first and second pairs alike will skate on the same light curvature, arriving at the centre simultaneously.

Each skater, as has been said, must do his best always to be opposite his partner with the centre midway between them, and must sacrifice his own skating (fudge to get speed, or put on the brake with the other foot) in order to preserve this position. But the second pair have a more difficult task in this than the first. The caller (that Emperor and Autocrat) skates as he chooses, and the caller's partner has only to keep opposite the caller. But in the case of the second pair, they have not only to keep opposite each other, but to keep equidistant between the first pair. Should they be opposite to each other, they may still, from not being equidistant from the first pair, be in the wrong position, and thus be throwing the figure out of the square. They are recommended, therefore, to keep their right places not so much by seeing that they are opposite each other, as by keeping their even distances from the first pair. If the first pair are square, and each of the second pair is at an equal distance from the first, it follows without further consideration that the second pair must be opposite each other. Should the first pair, however, be markedly out of the square, it is advisable for the second pair to keep at right angles to the caller, and thus keep their own proper position relative to each other. In this way, when the first pair have got square to each other again, the position of the second pair will require no further readjustment.

The second pair should always follow the first pair out from the centre as soon as their way is clear, and come into the centre again as soon after them as they can. But they should never press so closely upon them as to make the first pair hurry to get out of their way. This is more particularly the case when back turns, or brackets and counters, are going to be skated at or off the centre. Such turns, to be skated with ease and confidence, demand plenty of ice, and if the first pair have an uneasy consciousness (especially if the turn to be skated is a blind turn, like the I B turn or the O B counter, when the skater necessarily must lose sight of his centre and the other skaters) that the second pair are somewhere very close about, it is a handicap to their skating. In such cases the second pair should consciously leave a longer interval between them and the first pair in approaching the centre, which they can easily make up afterwards by a little added pace and a more pronounced curve on leaving the centre again. So too on back passes: the first pair should be allowed to get quite clear of the course the second skaters will come along before the second pair arrive at their centre. By practice, of course, the accuracy of eye in judging pace and direction becomes vastly more acute, and passes and turns can be made with an ever-decreasing allowance of ice, but until skaters are very certain both of themselves and their party, they should err in the other direction, and give a longer interval than is really necessary rather than risk causing anxiety to the first pair, or making a collision possible.

Crossing-Six

Just as the crossing-four consisted of two pairs, so the crossing-six consists of three pairs, who start from the centre in as quick succession as possible.

In many ways this is the most delightful species of combined that can be skated: but it is also far the most difficult, for though in the earlier days of figure-skating, when the calls were, in general, far simpler than those which are used now and the pace much slower, four crossing-pairs and even more were skated at the Skating Club, six for practical purposes is the largest number who can skate combined pair skating with any speed or accuracy.

The six victims stand round their centre as before, at equal distances from each other, so that they form the six angles of an imaginary regular hexagon. On the first pair starting, the second pair have to leave as closely on their heels as possible, so that the third pair, who cannot start till the first two pairs have gone, may get off also without delay.

As before, the first pair must skate very straight out towards their circumference, and the second pair curve their edges a little more strongly, so as to take up their relative positions at once; while the third pair must, for the same reason, curve their edges more strongly than the second pair, so that they may get into correct position with regard to them, on the same principle as the second pair have done with regard to the first pair. Indeed the edges of the third pair should be so strongly curved that they will probably not arrive at their circumference till the third stroke of the figure (*e.g.*, on the second turn in a twice back).

All six should then be skating at equal distances from each other on the circumference, taking up their strokes simultaneously, and continuing to do so till the order for recall to the centre comes.

On that they should all start simultaneously for the centre on the same curvatures as those on which they went out. Thus the first pair, skating on lightly curved edges, will arrive there first and start again, while the second pair on their more curved edge will be approaching the centre, and the third pair, curving still more strongly, will allow the second pair to get off.

But here a great deal of "give and take" must occur. If all six were mechanically exact, the figure would proceed with the regularity (and dullness) of a machine, but both second and third pairs must be constantly on the watch to modify their own skating to meet the irregularities of themselves and others. The third pair, for instance, will constantly find that they cannot take up the stroke of recall simultaneously with the others, else they would (curve they never so strongly) arrive at the centre before it was clear. They must therefore be always ready to dwell on their last circumferential edge, and not immediately take up the stroke to the centre.

In this crossing-six the second pair have far the hardest place. They are aware that they have a pair behind them, who cannot get into the centre until they have cleared, and that they have a pair in front on whose sacred steps they must not too closely press. Between this Scylla and Charybdis they must steer as they best can, and be always ready to fudge if they are a little behind, and the third pair is close upon them, and on the other hand to retard their skating, by harder edges, or by braking with the unemployed foot, if they are too close upon the first pair. The blame, if the figure gets out of the square is almost invariably attributed to them, but they may console themselves with the reflection that they are attempting, anyhow, to fill the most difficult place in all combined skating.

Of crossing-eights the present writer cannot speak, since he has never seen one or taken part in one. From the account in Badminton it appears that the last pair do not leave the centre till the first pair are returning to it, *i.e.*, that they do not begin a call until the first pair have finished it. It would seem then that they will have to carry in their heads two complete calls, for the caller will announce the second figure while they are still only just started on the first! It would appear also that the eight skaters are never out on the circumference together.

It seems a very difficult game.

Simultaneous Combined

With two, four or six skaters, skating in pairs is always possible and delightful, but there are many occasions on which only three skaters are available, or when a large number, up to ten or twelve, all want to skate. The practice of simultaneous skating will satisfy the requirements of all these, and is in itself a most charming variety of combined skating, being easier than pair-skating, and possessing most of its attractions. It affords also the only possibility of three or five skaters having a combined figure together, since the old practice of a pair leading and being followed by a solitary widower, with nobody opposite him, is extremely dismal.

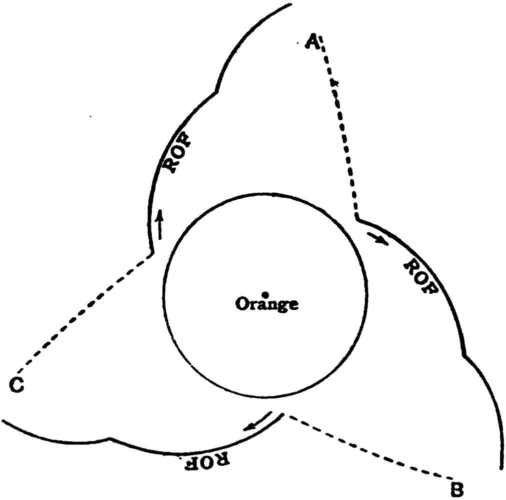
Three skaters, then, stand, at the beginning, round their orange, on the three angles of an equilateral triangle. As before, they skate up towards their centre before the first stroke, but they skate up to it simultaneously and leave it on the outward journey simultaneously, keeping it, as before, on the inside of their curve. But they must no longer take off quite close to the orange, since if they did so (and more especially if eleven or twelve of them did so) they would run into each other.

They must never then get close to their orange at all, but imagine (if there are three of them) that there is a sacred circle round about the orange, extending some three feet each way, on to which they must never trespass. The orange thus becomes, so to speak, the centre of their centre, which is a circle some six feet across. This they treat exactly as they treated the orange itself in pair-skating and skate close up to it, and leave it on the inside of their curve when they are starting out, and come in on the near side when they are approaching it, unless they are told to " off meet " or "off pass," or "off centre-something." The diagram (Fig. 23) ought to make this clear.

There is no crossing, it will be observed. A starts in the direction where B is standing. B starts towards C, C starts towards A, and they all get as quickly as possible, as in pair-skating, on to their circumference, where they turn and change simultaneously until recalled.

The stroke in is made in a precisely similar way:

each follows the other, whether it is meet or off-meet, or pass or off-pass, and again they may not trespass on the sacred circle of which their orange is the centre, but bring their approach up short of it if a "meet" is called; beyond it if the call is "off-meet," and having reached the circumference of this "centre-circle," leave it again as in pair-skating, though not crossing.



The call is "forward turn"—the dotted lines show the preliminary stroke of A, B, and C as they skate up to their centre before starting, the broad lines the shape and direction of their forward turn.

FIG. 23

This imaginary centre-circle increases in size according to the number of skaters, and a rough thumb-rule for it is that each skater increases its radius by about a foot. Thus, if there are three skaters they ought not to get nearer than about three feet to the orange, but start three feet away from it, and in returning to it keep the same distance from it, whether they are meeting or passing, or making centre turns at it. If ten are skating together they ought in the same way to come in to it, and go out from it about ten feet from it. Thus, if they make an ideally correct pass or off-pass, there will be ten skaters on the circumference of this circle, all close together, but all with sufficient stroke room.

This form of skating produces extremely pretty effects. The skaters have been away on the circumference and are called back to the centre, let us say, by a centre-change. They all come in towards the centre, on direct edges (for in simultaneous skating the conduct of every skater is like that of the first pair in crossing-figures), until they are all quite close together, on the circumference of the centre-circle. Then, simultaneously, the edge is changed and the whole figure opens out again like a fan unfurled.

In simultaneous skating these centre-changes or centre-turns should be more frequently employed (comparatively speaking) than in crossing-pairs, given that the same class of skater is skating, since it is much easier for four skaters to do such turns simultaneously than it is for two of them to do them opposite each other, while the second pair have to time their movements so as to be just clear of the first pair. In this simultaneous business everybody is doing the same thing at the same moment, and the time is therefore easier, while also there is no question about the different curvatures necessary between the first and second pair. All the skaters must adopt the caller's methods, and so long as they skate edges more or less similar to his, they will be at peace with one another.

CHAPTER X

A set of sets.

IN the second-class test of the National Skating Association the skater will find five excellent calls of the simplest possible character, with regard to which he is required to satisfy his judges before he can receive his silver badge. They are as good as anything he can have for teaching him control of his edge, but it is also most important that he should learn as early as possible what skating on the circumference really is, and in these calls he never gets properly out from his centre, as no one of them takes him further away than "Once back and forward." For it will be remembered that a proper circumference was not reached till the second stroke, and in all these he is recalled to his centre on the second stroke, if not before.

He is recommended, therefore, while practising these, which are incorporated with others in Set B, to practise also Set A, which, while on the whole they are easier to skate than Set B, will teach him the "feel" of the circumference, and teach him also to skate edges which are not curly, as those in Set B mostly are. There is no greater sin in combined skating than not getting well away from the centre, striking boldly out from it, and returning to it in the same manner. Set A is therefore given first, but Set B should be practised simultaneously with it. Footnotes for his guidance are given with every set, and in all cases (except by carelessness or misadventure on the part of the author) every call throughout all the sets alternates, that is to say, if it is started on the right foot, the right foot also brings the skater back to the centre at the close of the call, so that he can at once do the same figure starting on the left foot. The sets, as a whole, increase in difficulty, since they gradually introduce fresh turns. Periodically, a set is given which sums up, so to speak, the features of the two or three previous sets, while certain others have been framed to give special practice in rockers, brackets, counters, etc. All the sets may, of course, be skated in pairs or simultaneously, but the beginner is advised to start with one other skater only, a good one preferred. Good skaters, he may be told, are extremely amiable, and without exception will enjoy helping him. They can also, for the most part, call beautiful sets out of their own heads, making them up as they go along. The beginner should take all possible advantage of this wonderful gift.

Set A

(In all these sets the word "turn" is used for "three.")

1. Forward and inside and once back and forward meet.
2. Once back and forward and inside pass and forward and inside and forward meet.
3. Forward and inside and forward about and once back and forward and inside off-meet.
4. Twice back and forward meet.
5. Inside and forward and inside and once back off-meet.
6. Inside and once back and forward and inside meet.
7. Once back and forward and inside and forward off-pass and inside forward and forward meet.
8. Forward and inside and forward about and forward and inside forward meet.
9. Once back and back, dismiss.

Notes

1. The circumference should be reached on the second stroke, *i.e.*, the LIF, and even the beginner should try to place his circumference at least thirty to forty feet distant from the centre. Having arrived at this distance on the LIF edge, he must go no further away from his centre, but skate the "once back" that follows at a uniform distance from it. The end of the back stroke of "once back" he should make to curve inwards towards his centre, as he gets into position for his forward stroke in, which should be taken on a

light edge, *i.e.*, on an edge that does not curve sharply, but is, so to speak, on the circumference of a very large circle.

(These distances, thirty to forty feet from the centre, cannot be given accurately, since so much depends on the quality of the ice. But if the ice is at all good, thirty feet from the circumference ought not to be too much to aim at from the beginning.)

2. Here the circumference is reached on the back edge of the once back, and the beginner will not without practice get so far out as he did on the first call of "forward and inside." But he should try to make his forward turn large, and avoid curling, and strike his back outwards from the centre. The forward that follows should continue on the same curve, while on the inside pass he must strike direct for the centre, and pass it on the near side, continuing the curve for some ten feet after he has passed it. He has then another forward edge, which must take him still away from his centre, and about as far out as his "once back" took him. Again a direct edge brings him home.

3. Forward about, of course, changes his direction, so that if he starts on the right foot, moving towards the right, he will at the end of this third stroke be moving towards his left. The inside off-meet will bring him beyond his centre, so that the centre lies inside his curve.

4. He should reach his circumference, as before,

on the back of the first once back, and skate the second once back (which makes up the twice back) without either increasing or diminishing his distance from the centre.

5. The only troublesome stroke is that of the back in the once-back off-meet. This (as has been stated before) requires a little judgement, and as soon as he has started his back edge, he should look over the shoulder of the employed foot a moment, to calculate his distance, before he gets into position for the O B edge.

7 and 8. Nothing new; but only application of what has been said.

9. The "and back" must be taken on the cross-roll. As he takes the edge up, he should, as in all dismiss calls, touch his cap to his partner, who has been calling, or if he has been calling, to the skater who has been his partner. After this formal "thank you," the skaters usually come together again at once and say how nice it has been, irrespective of truth. This is not a rule, but an amenity, which is quite as important.

Set B

This set should be practised in conjunction with Set A. It contains all the calls of the second class National Skating Association, which are marked as such. As the last of these calls does not alternate the feet, any easy figure, like "forward meet," can be put in after call 5, to enable this to be done. In none of these will the skater reach a distant circumference, since as soon as he begins to get out on his second stroke he will find himself recalled to the centre. But they are excellent practice for judging the return to the centre.

1. Forward turn meet.
2. Once back and forward meet.
3. Once back and forward turn meet.
4. Once back off meet and forward turn meet.
5. Once back meet and back and forward turn meet.

Second class N.S.A. calls.

(To alternate the feet after this last call.)

6. Forward meet.
7. Once back off meet and forward and inside and forward meet.
8. Forward and inside and forward turn around, dismiss.

Notes

1. This is forward turn to a centre: look at your partner, and make your turn when he does.

2. Get well round on the back of the "once back" in order to skate a fairly direct forward edge to the centre.

3. Do not curl the back of the "once back," but

keep it out. Make a strong stroke in the "forward turn meet," since having kept the back of the "once back" well out from the centre, there is room to make a long-edged turn to get in on. Having got on to the I B after the turn that brings you into the centre, get on to emphasized travelling position on the I B edge, since the next strike from the centre will be a forward strike. This is exactly the same approach to the centre as was detailed in "forward turn to a centre."

4. Remember what "off" means.

5. The back stroke after the "once back meet" has to be taken on the cross-roll back, with feet crossed.

7. After the once back has come to the off-meet, strike boldly out towards a big circumference.

8. "Forward turn around" implies that you must continue the I B edge until you are facing towards the centre again. Then touch your cap.

Set C

(This set introduces the changes of edge. In such changes the edge both before and after the change should be firm and long: it is no use getting, let us say, on a R O F, and at once changing it. They should all be even, deliberate edges.)

1. Forward and forward turn about and forward and inside and forward about change off-meet.

2. Once back change (about) and inside and once back meet.

3. Twice back and forward off centre change and forward and inside meet.

4. Forward turn and inside back change and once back and forward off-meet.

5. Once back and forward and inside forward centre change and inside forward meet.

6. Twice back about and inside forward and once back and forward and inside forward off centre change meet.

7. Forward and inside change turn, dismiss.

Notes

1. "Forward and forward turn about" should take the skater quite away from his centre. He should remain distant, being careful not to get any nearer his centre till the call comes. He must keep quite far away from it, because the call "forward about change off meet," which recalls him, *wants* plenty of room. In this last stroke (which he is skating towards the right) he must hold his R O F edge till it is definitely going in the opposite direction, and not change the edge till then. He must make his forward edge as bold and big as he can, and, as recommended before, go to sleep on it. If he changes this edge in a hurry, he will skate short of the centre.

2. "About" is given in brackets, for the reason that on the back stroke of the "once back," a change of edge will necessarily bring him about. He cannot in

fact change his edge on this "back" and hold it at all, without going about. The whole subject is treated of in a short appendix, and may be gone into there; for the present it is sufficient to say that if you are skating L O B and change the edge (which is skated on the circumference) you will automatically be going in the contrary direction, *i.e.*, towards the left. This bracketed "about" therefore is really a comment (perhaps unnecessary) on the direction that the change will put you on to.

3. No fresh complication. Only get on to a distant circumference until recalled, and on the second back edge get well round so as to strike direct towards the centre, instead of curling hopelessly round.

6. This is a long call (designedly). Keep out away from the centre all the time, until the recall comes. It is to be hoped that you will find yourself very far from your centre before the end of the "twice-back," and the further you find yourself, the easier will be the stroke back to the centre. It is an easy stroke, and should be taken at the highest speed of which the skater is capable, since the edge has to be changed off-centre, and a complete circle of edge then skated. The figure is perfectly easy to those who strike well, and if there is found to be any difficulty about it, such difficulty arises from a slow and faulty strike. After the off-centre change, it is very important to go to sleep.

7. Hold the last edge.

Set D

This set contains more or less a summary of the three previous sets, and introduces nothing the skater has not already learned.

1. Once back and forward and inside and forward off-centre turn change and forward and inside meet.
2. Twice back about and inside and forward centre change and forward turn off meet.
3. Inside forward change turn and inside and forward about change off-pass and once back meet.
4. Forward turn and inside back about and once back and inside back off meet.
5. Inside forward and forward about turn about and inside change (about) and inside and forward centre change and once back off meet.
6. Forward turn change and forward and inside and once back meet and back and forward meet.
7. Twice back around, dismiss.

Notes

2. In approaching the centre at "forward turn off meet," remember to get the body into emphasized travelling position, in order to be able to strike a light edge on the I F that follows.

4. Reach the circumference about the middle of the

inside back about, and skate the once back that follows on the circumference.

6. "Forward turn change" necessarily takes the skater about, so that while (on the right foot) he begins his journey from the centre towards the right, after he has changed his edge he will be travelling on the circumference towards the left.

Set E

This set in addition to using the materials already employed introduces two fresh turns, the inside forward turn and the outside back turn. Wherever they come they should always be prepared for very fully, according to the directions given under their heads, so that they may be skated without any scrape. All turns, of course, should be skated thus, but the beginner will find that the I F turn seems to lose pace more almost than any other, unless it is skated clean, which cannot be done unless the preparation for it is thorough.

1. Twice back and forward and inside off-centre turn and forward meet.
2. Forward and inside and once back turn about and inside forward and once back about turn about and forward and inside off meet.
3. Forward turn and inside back and inside change about and inside turn and forward meet.

4. Twice back turn meet and inside turn and forward and inside meet.

5. Inside once back and inside forward and once back off-centre turn and forward and inside forward meet.

6. Twice back turn and forward and inside forward off-centre turn and forward turn meet.

7. Inside forward two turns out about, dismiss.

Notes

1. Carry the back edge of the inside off-centre turn well out towards the circumference, not letting it curl back towards the centre, else there will be no room for a good strike on the forward meet.

2. In "once back about turn about," the back stroke, since it goes about, must be held till it has described a full half-circle and is beginning to take the skater in the opposite direction to that in which he started; the edge after the turn should similarly be held for a half-circle, so that at the end he has travelled through a whole circle, and has arrived back more or less where he started his back edge. He has practically skated "back around of a turn," the place where the turn was to be skated being further specified by the direction "back about turn about."

4. Get well out from the centre on the inside turn.

5. Once back consists of a forward turn and an outside back. Inside once back is the exact counterpart of this on the other edges, and therefore consists

of an inside forward turn and an inside back. The inside back stroke should be taken with the foot crossed behind the travelling foot, as directed in the section on "Strokes for the combined figure."

7. "Out" means out from the centre, away from it.

Set F

All the simple turns except the inside back turn have now been introduced, but before that fatal moment arrives, the skater had better just add to his repertory the inside forward Mohawk and the outside back rocker, since the preparation for, and manner of skating them so closely resembles the inside forward turn and the back turn he has just become familiar with in Set E. These are quite as easy to skate as the two last turns, and very much easier, both in themselves and in regard to the combined figure, than the inside back turn, which must follow.

1. Forward and inside forward Mohawk and inside once back about and once back off meet.
2. Inside forward and twice back off centre-rock and inside forward turn and forward meet.
3. Inside forward Mohawk and back and once back about and inside forward Mohawk meet.
4. Once back rock (about) and inside forward Mohawk about and forward meet.
5. Inside and twice back about rock meet.

6. Forward change Mohawk and inside forward and once back meet.

7. Once back rock out, dismiss.

Notes

1. The first stroke of the inside forward Mohawk should finish about on the circumference, and the second Mohawk stroke be placed along it.

3. Start the inside Mohawk (which has to come back to the centre) along the circumference, but bring it in towards the centre before taking the stroke on to the I B.

4. "About" is placed in brackets, for if the back edge of the rocker is properly held, it will necessarily go about.

5. The right moment to rock is as soon as ever the "about" is made; the longer it is delayed after that the more curly will have to be the second edge in order to get back to the centre.

Set G

The inside back turn belongs of itself to the most difficult group of turns in which the maximum possible rotation of the body is required, and in combined skating it has this added difficulty that when it is skated on the circumference the skater must necessarily lose sight of the other skaters, and of the centre when the turn is to be skated there. It is therefore one of the hardest turns to time or to place, since it is always, so to speak, skated blind. This set, as well as introducing this turn, uses all the materials already given in other sets. It will require a great deal of practice to skate smoothly.

1. Twice back and forward about of two turns and once back turn meet.
2. Inside twice back and inside turn about and inside forward and forward two turns meet.
3. Once back and inside back turn about and once back centre turn and forward and inside forward turn off meet.
4. Forward turn and inside forward and forward around of two turns and inside forward off centre Mohawk change and forward and inside forward meet.
5. Inside forward and forward two turns and inside and forward turn off pass turn and inside forward off meet.
6. Inside Mohawk turn and inside about and inside and forward off centre turn turn meet.
7. Inside Mohawk change out around dismiss.

Notes

1. Keep both turns of the "forward about of two turns" on the circumference and come about on the last edge.

2. "Inside twice back" is inside once back + inside once back. It is impossible to get as much pace on this as on "twice back," but the shape of the figure should be the same. The most difficult part is the strike on to the inside edge for the second turn after the "inside once back." It should be taken on as light an edge as possible, and to ensure that, the attitude for the first inside back should be much emphasized, as if an inside back bracket were coming. The same stroke is necessary for the next inside turn about.

3. Keep the turn of the "and inside back turn about" on the circumference.

4. A long call, which must be announced piecemeal by the caller. The "forward around of two turns" should be skated like forward two turns to a centre, the skater arriving at the end of it back on the circumference. Do not change the edge after the Mohawk in a hurry, but get well away from the centre first.

5. Keep the turns of "forward two turns" on the circumference without curling in towards the centre. Otherwise there will not be room for a satisfactory "forward turn off pass" which follows. Hold on the I B edge of this till you are well away from the centre.

6. Make a long edge on the I B of this Mohawk and do not prepare for the turn until you have got well out. In the last stroke the first turn has to be skated at the off centre, and the edge must be held till the

skater has arrived at the same point at which he made the second turn in forward two turns to a centre.

7. Hold the IB edge of the Mohawk right out into the country before changing it.

Set H

This set and the next are two specialized sets introducing the forward rockers and the forward brackets and counters respectively. Since the outside forward Mohawks and Choctaws contain nothing new to the performer of the forward bracket, these are also smuggled in.

1. Once rocker back and inside forward and forward change rock and inside forward off meet.
2. Twice back and forward off centre rock and forward and inside forward meet.
3. Once inside rocker back and forward and inside forward turn and forward meet.
4. Forward two turns and inside forward and forward about rock off meet.
5. Twice rocker back and inside forward and forward off centre change rock and inside forward Mohawk about and forward meet.
6. Forward turn and inside back change rock and inside forward and forward centre rock and forward meet.
7. Forward two rockers out dismiss.

Notes

1. Just as once back was a forward turn followed by a stroke on the other foot on the opposite edge to that of the tail of the turn, so once rocker back is a forward rocker (O F to O B) followed by an inside back.

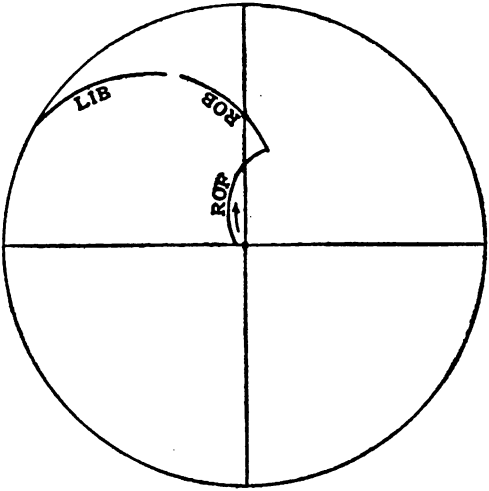


FIG. 24

The rocker should be skated well out from the centre and the inside back reach the circumference. The figure necessarily makes the skater go about, for starting R O F towards the right he will lay down his L I B in the opposite direction, as in the diagram. It will be observed also that these two strokes do not entirely fill a quarter of the circle, for the direction has been reversed and the edges are not all in the same curve of progression.

2. The forward off centre rock should be approached on an edge of light curvature, and the centre left on a corresponding light edge, so that the skater is taken well out from it.

3. "Once inside rocker back" on analogy consists of an inside forward rocker followed by an outside back edge. It should be skated on precisely the same lines as the "once rocker back."

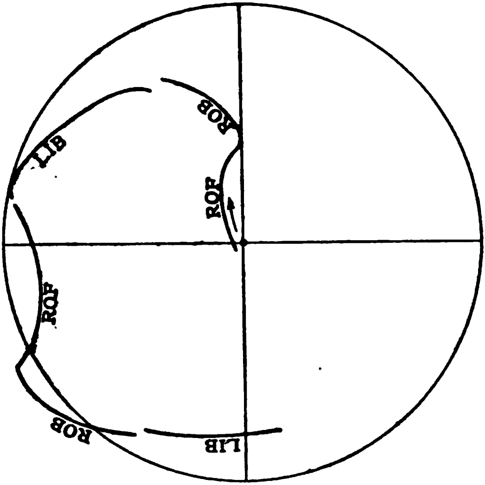


Fig. 25

5. Twice rocker back should be skated about on the lines shown in the diagram. The first curve of the second rocker starts on the circumference and curves out to the circumference again. The skater will thus

find himself in a position that strikes him as new, for this ROF lies not along his circumference, but on a curve opposed to it. He skated it, however, when he changed edge on a circumference, though he never laid it down as a fresh stroke before. This second rocker should be made about on the circumference, and the result is that the second edge and the ensuing LIB are skated within the circumference. The only alternative is to start the second part of the twice rocker back in an outward direction, but this is not recommended.

The skater should pay particular attention to the general shape of the figure here illustrated, and should watch his partner very carefully during it, as it is easy to get out of the square over it, but quite unnecessary.

6. After the forward turn the inside back should be brought on to the circumference, the change made there and the rocker laid down along it.

7. To be skated out on light edges.

Set J

Introducing forward brackets, counters, and the kindred Mohawks and Choctaws.

1. Twice back and forward bracket about and forward and inside forward off pass meet.

2. Once inside counter back and forward and inside

forward bracket pass and once back and forward meet.

3. Once counter back and inside forward and forward Mohawk about and inside forward and forward centre turn meet.

4. Forward and inside once bracket back and inside forward and forward centre counter and forward and inside forward meet.

5. Inside change bracket and inside forward and forward centre Choctaw and back and once bracket back meet.

6. Once Choctaw back and once back and forward and inside forward about counter meet.

7. Inside back and inside forward Choctaw out around dismiss.

Notes

2. "Once inside counter back" is, of course, an inside counter followed by an outside back, and should be skated on exactly the same lines as a once rocker back.

3. "Once counter back" is forward counter and inside back, to be laid down on the same lines as the rocker.

4. "Inside once bracket back" is the same as inside once back, except that an inside bracket takes the place of an inside turn. A great deal of pace can be got out of this, as the bracket puts the skater in a convenient position for a strong inside back.

6. "Once Choctaw back" is Choctaw and outside back and is the same shape as once rocker back.

Set K

This is a mixed set, introducing no fresh material, but employing only the turns already skated.

1. Twice back and back inside centre turn change and once back meet.
2. Forward change Choctaw and forward and inside forward around of two turns and forward bracket off meet.
3. Forward turn and inside back change rock and inside forward and forward off centre rock and forward meet.
4. Once bracket back and inside back about and forward and inside off-centre rock and back and forward meet.
5. Inside forward turn and inside back turn about and forward turn and back off-centre turn and forward meet.
6. Forward rocker and forward bracket and inside forward change rock and forward centre counter and forward meet.
7. Twice back and forward off-centre rock change out about dismiss.

Notes

1. This is adapted (in order to alternate) from one of the first class National Skating Association calls. The inside back should be put down almost immediately after the last stroke of the twice back and carried straight into the centre.

3. Get on to the circumference on the inside back of the "inside back change rock," and carry it along the circumference, changing and rocking there.

Set L

To introduce "inside back rocker" and "inside back counters and brackets." These are all hard turns to skate in combined, since there is a tendency to make the second edges hard and curly. Ample preparation is required for the I B rocker, which is a turn of maximum revolution, to avoid this; while in the counters and brackets, the foot should be turned round as far as possible, and the cusp made very open.

1. Forward turn and inside back bracket and inside forward and forward Mohawk meet.

2. Once back and inside back rock (about) and forward Mohawk change counter and forward turn off pass and inside forward meet.

3. Inside Mohawk bracket and inside forward and once back and inside back centre counter and once back and forward meet.

4. Forward turn rock (circle) and forward and inside forward Mohawk counter about and once back off-pass turn and forward meet.

5. Twice back and back inside off-centre bracket and inside forward and forward meet.

6. Once back change rock and forward about and once back pass and forward Mohawk meet.

7. Forward turn counter out about dismiss.

Notes

2. "Forward Mohawk change counter." The turn and changes must all be kept out on the circumference.

4. "Forward turn rock" brings the skater to the circumference. The caller may or may not call "circle."

5. The inside back edge to be laid down almost immediately after the last stroke of the twice back.

Set M

A very short set of four calls will probably satisfy even the gluttonous, as they each contain one or more back brackets or back counters. These are extremely hard to place when they are executed at the centre, and since anybody falling at the centre may cause rather serious damage if his partner is just arriving there on the same blind turn, these turns are given after the centre has been passed.

1. Twice back bracket about and inside forward and forward Mohawk off pass counter and inside and forward meet.

2. Once back and forward and inside around of two brackets and forward turn meet.

3. Inside back and back counter and inside forward and once back off pass bracket circle and once back about counter off meet.

4. Inside forward Choctaw counter out and inside forward and once back pass counter and inside and forward meet.

5. Forward two counters out dismiss.

Notes

1. The forward Mohawk should be skated in correct position till the centre is passed, and then full preparation made for the counter, which should be skated out on a light edge.

2. "Inside around of two brackets" is of course a complete circle containing two brackets hanging like a loop on the circumference.

3. In "once back about counter off meet," the skater should travel in correct position on his back edge till he sees the centre easily over his unemployed shoulder. He should then begin to prepare for his counter, and will have gone about by the time he is ready for it.

CHAPTER XI

Various special points in combined skating, including "crossing pairs on opposite feet."

(i) *The Call Once (or Twice) Forward*

THE moderately advanced skater is liable to hear either of these calls. The first time he hears "once forward," he will probably skate a forward edge and wonder why other people are doing other things. If he hears "twice forward," he will probably skate two forward edges and wonder even more, not recollecting that he is certainly wrong, since two forward edges would be called "forward and forward."

But the call is a perfectly legitimate one, and is a formula like "once back" or "twice back." It is, in fact, the logical opposite of these more common formulas. Now "once back" is a forward turn followed by an outside back. "Once forward" therefore (logically) is a back turn followed by an outside forward. And logic is quite right: that is exactly what it is. Every edge in "once back" is the same edge as in "once forward," only every edge is skated in the opposite direction. Outside forward, that is to say, becomes outside back, inside back becomes inside forward after the turn, and outside back becomes outside forward. "Once back" is forward turn and back; "once forward," is back turn and forward.

Thus in "once back meet and once forward meet" the skater skates a forward turn and meets on the outside back, and then (crossing his feet, as there is a back edge to be skated from a back edge) skates a back turn and meets on an outside forward.

"Twice forward" is once forward + once forward, just as "twice back" is once back + once back. After his once forward he is on the outside forward edge, and has to skate another back turn followed by a forward edge. He therefore has to get from his outside forward on to an outside back. This he must do in the simplest possible manner, by skating a Mohawk. "Twice forward," therefore, is "outside back turn and forward Mohawk turn and outside forward."

This principle of twice forward can be applied to all turns and to both edges. Thus, "inside twice forward" is inside back turn and inside forward + inside back turn and inside forward. Here, therefore, after the "once forward," an inside forward Mohawk puts the skater on to the inside back edge, from which he has to turn to outside forward in his second once forward, which completes the inside twice forward.

Similarly with rockers, counters, and brackets, which may be given in abbreviation:

Twice rocker forward = O B rocker and I F (Choctaw) O B rocker and I F.

Twice inside rocker forward = I B rocker and O F (Choctaw) I B rocker and O F.

The "counter forwards" are similarly connected with Choctaws, and the brackets forward are connected like the turn with Mohawks.

The call is a quite simple and reasonable one: it is necessary, however, to understand what it is.

(ii) *Ambiguous Abouts*

There are certain calls in skating which imply an "about," and in which "about" need not be called, since it is not possible to skate them without going about. Once rocker back, for instance, skated from the centre, starts towards the right, but the rocker itself makes it necessary that after the turn the skater should be skating towards the left, so that he reaches his circumference on the L I B travelling in an opposite direction from that in which he started from the centre. Forward change turn similarly skated from the centre on the right foot starts towards the right, but the change in itself reverses the direction, and the turn is made towards the left. About such calls as these, since they start from the centre and cannot be skated without a change of direction, there is no ambiguity, but other changes and turns on the circumference are not always quite so clear.

Forward change turn on the circumference, for instance, can conceivably be skated in two ways, as shown on the diagram.

In (i) very light curves are laid down, with the effect that the whole figure lies along the circumference and no change of direction is made. But in (ii), though the changes and turns are likewise laid on the circumference, the greater curvature of edge brings the figure "about," though it is impossible to say that any of the curves are by themselves "about" curves.

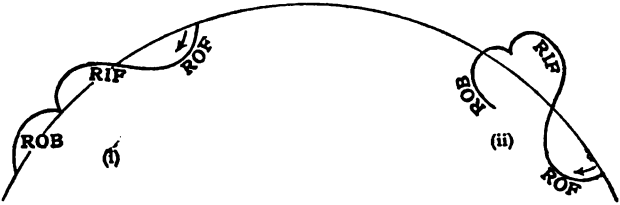


FIG. 26

In such cases the caller's partner will do well to look at him in order to see which it is his intention to skate; also the call succeeding the ambiguous figure will, by the nature of its first edge, tell him almost for certain what is meant.

The general consensus of skaters and callers would probably adopt the manner of skating shown in (ii), and go about on any "change turn" called on the circumference, without the addition of the call "about," while the call "forward change turn about" would be taken to contain this implied "about" of the "forward change turn," and to have tacked on to it another about, with the effect that the figure would, from the point of view of the skater who skates as (i) does, be an around, the arrow, in the subjoined diagram, showing the direction of the next stroke, which is in the same direction as that of the original R O F. An around (or about about) has therefore been actually skated, though the call would probably have been "about" merely. The present writer's suggestion is that such a view is the correct one, and that such a figure as "forward change turn" skated from the centre or on the circumference, implies a change of direction which should not be called. On the other hand, the man who wishes to skate as shown in (i) may feel ill-used. But he is probably, though quite reasonable in his interpretation, in a minority.

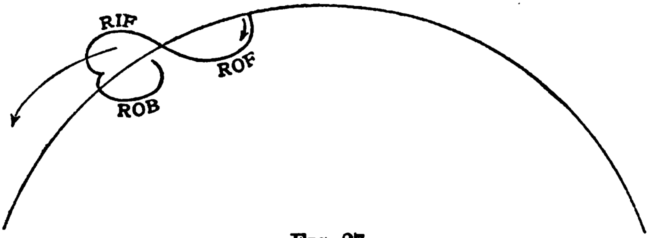


FIG. 27

(iii) *The Shape of Once or Twice Rocker or Counter Back*

Occasional dissenters are found from the view already expressed as to the proper shape for these figures, and one sometimes sees them skated so flat, with the edges of the counter and rocker so short that they cease to be of the slightest merit as figures. Skaters even sometimes hold that such a call as "inside twice counter back" should be skated straight away from the centre, and proceed to do so as in the diagram. It is true that such a way of skating will produce a good deal of speed, but if the caller wished such a manœuvre performed, he would call "inside twice counter back out." The same skaters, however, would skate "twice counter back" in the shape already recommended, since the counter requires much more preparation than the inside counter, and they thus have to hold their first edge longer. But if they are right in their interpretation of the "inside counter back," they ought to skate the "counter back" in a uniform manner. But they can't.

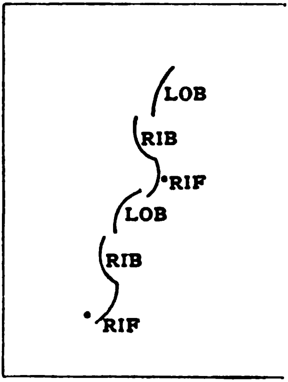


FIG. 28

Rockers and counters of all kinds make the same general lines of direction on the ice, and consequently they should, when they are called in their "once or twice backs," be laid down in the same shape. And if the general principle is admitted that two strokes as a rule take the skater out to his circumference and occupy a quarter of a circle more or less, they should be skated in the same kind of form as the ordinary "once back." It is true, as already stated, that they will not occupy quite a quarter of a circle, as the "once back" does, because all the edges of a "once back" progress in the same direction, whereas the second edge of all counters and rockers progresses in a different direction (to right or left, that is) from the first.

(iv) *Centre Turns*

The caller and skater should bear in mind the difference between the various turns when skated at the centre and when skated off centre. The simple turns and the rockers, when skated at the centre, necessitate the skater's back being turned both to the centre and to his partner as he prepares for and executes the turn, whereas if they are skated "off centre," the skaters see their centre and each other as they are preparing, and as they turn. It is therefore easier to skate the turns and the rockers, as well as the inside Mohawk and Choctaw (where the revolution is the same as in the turns and rockers) on the off-side of the centre, so that the skaters are facing one another, and it is on the off-side as a rule that they are called. They can, of course, and often are, skated at the centre, but the skater should know that he must lose sight of his centre before he gets to his turn, and should therefore pay special attention to his relative position to it and his partner as he approaches it. In the I B turn and I B rocker, the centre and the partner have to be lost sight of whichever side of the centre they are skated, but they are more easily judged, like the rest of these turns, when skated off-centre.

Forward counters, brackets and outside Mohawks and Choctaws, however, are more easily skated on the near side of the centre, for if they are skated on the off-side, the opposite revolution of the body to that employed in turns and rockers will cause the skaters to lose sight of each other and the centre when they are preparing for their turn; whereas if they are skated on the near side, the skaters will all have these important objects in view, and find it easier to lay down their turns accurately and squarely. In the O B bracket and counter, as in the I B turn and rocker, the centre must be lost sight of in any case, but it is slightly easier to skate them on the near side with hope of an accurate performance. These two turns, however, are not desirable manœuvres at the centre at any time, and it is better to pass first. In the I B bracket and counter, as well as the O B turns, the difference in difficulty does not exist, since on whichever side of the centre they are skated at, it remains in view up till the moment of turn.

Crossing Pairs on Opposite Feet

Whose was the ingenious brain that first thought of this entrancing possibility, I have been unable to discover. It is, in any case, a delightful and slightly dangerous game, which should recommend itself to the Athenian skater who loves some new thing. At present it has not been systematized at all, and there are probably not a dozen skaters who have ever tried it.

The game, as far as the present writer is able to see, must be played by four skaters only, since it appears impossible to skate it simultaneously, and the prospect of skating it with four crossing pairs stuns the brain, just as it would probably stun the skaters. Two skaters again cannot play at it, nor with any advantage can six. Let us start, therefore, with four who are going to skate in crossing pairs.

The caller and his partner, as usual, lead off, starting as usual, on their right feet. The second pair start, as usual, immediately afterwards.

But they start on their left feet.

The result is that the two pairs skate their first once back in opposite directions. They are then on their circumference when they have to skate their second twice back. Each member of the first pair will be converging towards one of the second pair, and they will have to pass each other on the circumference on the back of the second once back. One pair clearly has to pass outside the other, and it is suggested, therefore, that since the first pair have to get into the centre first, the second pair should always pass outside the first pair.

Then let us suppose that "forward turn" is called. Y, a member of the second pair, has passed A (the caller) back to back, and B, who has also passed Z on his back, is advancing in an opposite direction to meet him, while A and Z are now in danger of a collision. If the pairs are square they will pass at the same moment, and this is the moment when they should all make their turns opposite each other.

Similarly, if "forward change" is called, both pairs should make their change when opposite to each other, the second pair, as before, passing outside the first pair. They pass in the same manner in "abouts" on the circumference, and in the same manner pass and repass in "arounds." The opposing pair should always pass each other as close as possible, only just clearing each other. But the responsibility of these adventurous pairs lies with the second pair. It is their business always, when meeting the first pair, to keep outside them. Thrilling adventures occur at the centre when passes, off-passes, and centre turns are called. These should always be skated in the simultaneous fashion, A and Y arriving simultaneously on one side of the centre with B and Z, who arrive on the other. Here, again, whether it is a pass merely or a turn to be executed at the centre, Y and Z must be outside A and B, who should get as near to the centre as they possibly can. All four converge together, each pair (consisting for the moment of one member of the first pair and one of the second) meet back to back, or back to face, just clear each other and spread out again.

From this slight sketch of the general plan of the scheme, it will be seen that some calls are much more suitable than others. The point is to bring the pairs (one of the first pair, one of the second) together on a turn or a change. Thus a quantity of circumference travelling with many turns and changes is suitable; suitable also are passes and turns at the centre. But mere meets followed by a fresh start are liable to throw the figure out of the square, and for the same reason the difficult turns such as O B counter and bracket, I B turn and rocker should be avoided, since different skaters require different periods of preparation for these. The whole fun of the figure is that the turn and change should be skated when the opposing pairs meet, and thus, since such extreme accuracy is required, only the easier turns, those for which but little preparation is necessary, should be attempted.

But when, even if only for a few calls, the figure keeps square, and the opposing pairs meet with fair regularity for their changes and turns, and make these manœuvres close to each other, it is an extraordinarily pleasing game. The objection to it is its great difficulty, for very accurate timing is required, and if the opposing pair do not come together at the right moment, the whole point of the thing vanishes. Supremely difficult, too, is the function of the caller; not only has he to judge his own pace with accuracy, but he has to judge the pace of the member of the opposing pair advancing towards him on the circumference, and call something for which they will both be ready as they pass each other.

The game has been very little played at present, but it seems to contain in it the germs of an admirable amusement, and will probably be further investigated. Since it is clearly more reasonable that the second pair should skate outside the first on the circumferences, and that the responsibility of passing outside them is theirs, it is suggested that the second pair should be the fastest of the four skaters, as they have further to go in every case in less time.

The foregoing sets are in the main specialized sets, being for the most part designed to give the skater practice in one or two particular turns, and while it is still hoped that they will be useful in that regard, he will very likely feel that in most of them there is too much of two or three particular turns, and not enough general skating. The mixed sets given above are therefore supplemented by a further series, the calls in which are largely made up from calls already used. In case the skater may like to take these in less bulky form than this book on to the ice, they have been printed on cards, and will be found inserted in a pocket at the end of it. They increase in difficulty as they proceed, and it is the writer's hope that the last one or two of them may be considered as requiring some skill and judgement even by a company of experts.

THE END

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